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ECCLESIOLOGY.

A FRESH INQUIRY AS TO

THE FUNDAMENTAL IDEA

AND

CONSTITUTION

OF THE

NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH.

With a Supplement on Ordination.

BY

REV. E. J. FISH, D. D.

See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed tc thee in the Mount.—HEB. VIII, 5.

In whom all the building, fitly framed together, groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord.—EPH. II, 21.

NEW YORK:
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PREFACE.

IT is due to the reader of these pages to say, that their contents were framed with no original intention of making a book, and much less with any disposition to disagree with current opinions. Providential circumstances connected with the writer's ministry imposed upon him the necessity of studying the constitution of Christ's Church; and having once entered upon the study, he found no stopping-place short of where this treatise ends. In the search for harmony between current theories and New Testament teaching, he was as restless as Noah's dove over the surging billows. But studiously and prayerfully betaking himself to the Scriptures for the mind of the Spirit, and finding it, as he believed, he was as happy as Columbus could have been in discovering America. Thus led, he has reached all of his novel conclusions, and now puts them forth with the simple purpose of doing the Lord's will. If they shall in any manner aid troubled pastors and churches, or help in giving rest and stability to the times, he will be amply repaid. He only asks that the work be studied in the spirit in which it has been wrought.

It may be needless to say that he uses the term *ecclesiology* in its etymological sense for its peculiar expressiveness.

E. J. F.

ADRIAN, MICH., JANUARY 28, 1875.

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INTRODUCTION.

Section I.—Church Development.

THE New-Testament Church, in order to be properly studied, must be conceived as having life and growth as well as form. As a life, it has its own laws of being by which, in a measure, its ultimate form is determined. As a growth, it is not altogether unlike other growths in the general divisions of its history. There are pretty clearly defined what we may call its *pre-natal* or fœtal period, the period of *minority*, and the period of *majority:* the first extending from the advent of the Messiah to Pentecost; the second from Pentecost to the close of the Apostolic ministry; and the third from the close of the Apostolic ministry to the end of its career. The first two periods were, of course, formative; and they determined what the Church should be in the third, in which we live.

Section II.—Church Periods.

That these divisions are natural, and somewhat appropriately named, a moment's reflection, we think, will make evident.

There was a Church in existence during the first period, or the converts at Pentecost could not have been "added" to it. It was also in existence, in some

sense, at the beginning of the period, for the new-born Christ was the Head of the Church. But that its existence was little more than pre-natal, is evident from the difficulty ever felt in dating its visible beginning, and also from the paucity of references to it during this period.

The propriety of making the second period that of minority, appears in the fact that the Church was then under the immediate, and, as if parental, direction of Apostolic tutors and governors.

In the third period, called the period of its majority, it is thrown upon its own responsibility more, having only the light of the indwelling Spirit and the New Testament to guide it. Pentecost is appropriately called its birthday, because then it assumes a distinct visibility, such as it never had before. Indeed, prior to Pentecost the word *Church* occurs in the sacred writings but three times, and those solely in the book of Matthew—neither Mark, Luke, nor John using it so much as once.

Having assumed, then, that the Church is a growth, we wish, in the first place, to make good that assumption by briefly illustrating its growth during the first two periods of its history, premising that, from the nature of the first period, its growth must, of necessity, be somewhat obscure.

Section III.—Church Organism.

If the eye rest upon the babe in Bethlehem's manger, little is to be seen of the Church, although its veritable Head is before us. If it run over thirty

years of its subsequent history, while that infant is growing "in wisdom and in stature," the institution is scarcely more discernible. The Saviour's baptism arrives, the Kingdom of Heaven is proclaimed as at hand, but no Church organism appears. He begins to preach, calls the twelve and sends them out, baptises multitudes, and yet we could as easily trace the organs of the full-grown fowl in the vital dot of the egg as the organism of the Church in any definite compact as yet discernible.

Soon, however, the fact if not the form of organic relations appears in the saying addressed to Peter: "And I also say to thee, thou art Peter, and upon this rock will I build my Church; and the gates of the underworld shall not prevail against it."

Henceforward organization is more and more apparent. To the Church is given power to "bind and loose;" a treasurer appears; ordinances are observed; and at length we find a hundred and twenty, called "the Church," appointing a successor to the fallen Judas.

Passing into the second period, organization at once clearly appears, if it is not complete. We cannot, at the outset, tell what officers it is to have, or whether it is entirely distinct from the Jewish Synagogues. We can hardly more than guess what its form of government is to be, or in what manner it should conduct its business or worship. We know little of its authority over its individual members, and less of its relations to the Kingdom of Heaven. The great founder of churches and expounder of ecclesiastical

law is not yet spiritually born. But thirty-five of forty years pass by, and we are able to answer all of these questions.

The organism stands before us full grown and complete.

Section IV.—Spiritual Gifts and Official Functions.

During the ministry of John the Baptist and the earlier ministry of Christ, we search in vain for the slightest trace of the idea of spiritual gifts and official functions among those who could with any propriety be included in the inchoate Church. But it crops slightly out afterwards in the appointing and surnaming of the twelve. "Peter," *a rock*, indicates the character of the man's gifts; and hence, to some extent, the sphere to which he is adapted in the Church. "Sons of Thunder" were the sons of Zebedee, indeed; for their thunders against false doctrine and corrupt living have not ceased to reverberate on the ears of the race to this day. The appointment of the Seventy also hints the idea, for doubtless it was predicated upon it. In the parable of the talents, however, it acquires its greatest distinctness in this period, where the goods are said to be distributed "according to every man's particular ability."

In the second period the idea attains a marvelous distinctness of expression, though not suddenly, for gifts first appear, (1 Cor. 12: 4–12); then gifts and offices commingled, (1 Cor. 12: 27–31; Rom. 12: 6–8); and finally officers and their appropriate func-

tions, (Eph. 4: 11; 1 Tim. 3; Tit. 1: 5 sq., et cet.) As many as twenty-five years had passed from Pentecost before we have the first enumeration of gifts, and more than thirty-five before the catalogue of church officers and their functions is complete. It is not probable that even Apostles themselves knew, at the outset, to what the subject would grow. Certainly the Church people did not, else they had not been so divided in Corinth over Paul, Cephas and Apollos, and so furious in Jerusalem over Paul at the very close of his wonderful career.

Section V.—Doctrinal Growth.

Meagre indeed must have been the ideas of the Kingdom of Heaven of the multitudes who flocked to John's baptism, and whom he so sternly charged to bring forth fruits meet for repentance.

Perfectly puerile were those of the twelve when wrangling like boys for position of honor in that kingdom. Nor had their ideas become very elaborate when the repeated pre-announcement of their Master's sufferings and death found them so utterly stupid as to either the fact or its significance. Indeed the ascension found them still very deficient in ability to distinguish between a spiritual and a temporal reign. Still there was doctrinal growth during the period. The three years schooling of the twelve had instructed them to such an extent that the Master could commission them to preach the gospel in all the world to every creature and teach all things He had commanded.

But passing thus into the second period, when this commission is in process of fulfillment, we meet the great expositions of doctrine for all time. John on Christology, Paul on justification by faith, James on the relation of faith and works, the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews on the new priesthood, Peter and others on Eschatology, the Epistle to the Ephesians on Ecclesiology—we need but name such authors and their writings to show that doctrinal knowledge has made immense strides, leaving only the development of these germs needful in order to perfect any one in this branch of practical Christianity.

Section VI.—Spiritual Power.

Nothing is more important in the growth of the Church than spiritual power, the new dispensation differing from the old mainly in this regard. But spiritual power is conditioned very largely upon spiritual knowledge. Hence said the Saviour: "The *words* which I have spoken to you are spirit, and are life." Hence, too, the importance of the Holy Spirit's descent, that He might lead Christ's followers "into all truth."

Harmonious with this view, we find evidence among the people of very little of either spiritual knowledge or power in the early part of the Saviour's ministry, though we find abundant evidence of growth until the canon of inspiration is sealed. Law had exposed only its most superficial sense before the expositions of the Saviour on the Mount and elsewhere. Birth by the Spirit took Nicodemus, and doubtless

many others, entirely by surprise. With the greatest difficulty could even the twelve who were with the Saviour constantly comprehend the idea of a spiritual reign in which truth and the Spirit were the governing powers. And yet Pentecost, after the ascension, tells of a power and comprehension in spiritual things which is nothing less than miraculous; and if we pass along through the second period we find constant evidences of growth in this direction. What a rock has the timid, denying Peter become! What a son of thunder the tender-souled John! What a master of self and men is the gifted Paul! Not Jerusalem alone, but almost the whole Eastern world has been turned up-side down before the Apostolic ministry ends. With doctrinal growth, spiritual, or growth in, life-power keeps even pace, until we find the most diverse elements bound together in "one body," keeping "the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace," and looking forward with holy longing toward the realization of the higher "unity of the faith" when all should attain to a *perfect man*, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

These specifications we deem sufficient to establish our proposition that the Church is a growth, and hence is to be studied as we would study other growths,—in the facts of its history. We abate nothing from its supernatural origin and guardianship. We merely say that its great supernatural cause saw fit, not to strike it into existence full grown in a moment, but to conform its history, in this regard, to the common laws of organic existences.

Section VII.—The Laws of Growth.

We wish, in the second place, to notice some of those laws or controlling principles by which its growth is regulated, bearing in mind that it came into being in the "fullness of times" when it would feel the influence, not merely of inspired apostles and prophets and the indwelling spirit common to all saints, but of the current civilizations, languages, governments and religions as well; and bearing in mind again, that the limit of these influences is to be determined, not by speculation, but by the specific indications of the New Testament.

Thus guided, we should state,

Section VIII.—The First Law of Growth, *thus:*

A free development under the impulse of the indwelling Holy Spirit.

"And we received," says one of the apostolic guides, "not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God: that we might know the things that were freely given to us of God. Which things we also speak, not in words taught by man's wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit." "He that is spiritual judges all things." (1 Cor. 2: 12, 13, 15).

No more superficial view can be taken of Christianity than to look upon it as a system of rules and forms. As well might one dispose of a human being by giving simply the anatomy of his body. "The life is more than meat." "If any man has not the

Spirit of Christ, he is none of his," may as appropriately read: If any Church has not the spirit of Christ it is none of his. But since spirit is the most radical and controlling thing in a man, if one man, or an organized number of men have the Spirit of Christ, the external conduct and the organic forms will give expression to that Spirit as naturally as fruits give expression to the life-principle of a tree. The life-principle determines whether a tree shall take on the form and fruit of the oak, the apple, the pear, the peach or the fig; whether its leaves and flowers shall assume one model and fragrance or another.

The life-principle determines whether the germ of an egg shall develop into an ostrich, an eagle, a hawk or a serpent; whether a given nation in process of organization shall take on the monarchical, the republican or the oligarchical form of government, and whether its institutions shall be humane and elevating or barbarous and depressing. The life-principle has moulded the world's civilization and made Japheth to dwell in the tents of Shem. Things do not grow nor collocate themselves by chance in this world, not even the floodwood which gathers in an eddy or a cove. It is borne to its resting place by the strong under current of a resistless stream. Given the spirit which moves a people, and one can foretell the form of religious life they will lead or the government they will naturally adopt, whether ecclesiastical or civil, as readily as the astronomer can compute the time of a comet's return or of an eclipse.

Now since Christians are born of the Spirit and so come under the reign of a new life-principle, it must needs follow that their individual or associational development be somewhat in harmony with that all-controlling power. If that power dictate the life of the sot, the life of the sot it will be; if the life of a saint, the life of the saint must as inevitably follow. If it dictate one form of Church government rather than another, that form must be adopted sooner or later, and must prevail as the inner life-principle prevails. If the spirit ruling within be the "one Spirit" and not a conglomeration of spirits, then the saints must be one in Christ Jesus in the most radical elements of their nature. There can be no Jew *and* Greek, no barbarian *and* enlightened, no bond *and* free, nor even male *and* female, but all must be one. We may even say that in time that spirit will annihilate all important doctrinal differences as it did the middle wall of partition between Jews and Gentiles, and so give to the world the Christian unity for which the Saviour prayed.

But in all this the particular thing we wish now to notice is, that the individual is perfectly free. He seems to be moved by an overmastering force, and, in some sense, so he is; but it is a force which has become himself in the most radical sense and he is free, perfectly free. We do not say it is a freedom attended by no inward questionings and struggles. There were tremendous struggles before the too narrow spirit of Judaism could become catholic enough to embrace Gentiles as fellow heirs. But it was the strug-

gle of a man conquering himself, as when a sinner yields to Christ.

Pentecost may furnish us a good illustration. The Holy Spirit's descent made Jerusalem and the surrounding regions wild with religious excitement and turned thousands to Christ; but individual freedom suffered not a particle. No man was other than his proper self. None complained of an outside and oppressive power over-mastering them. The power which moved was like that of the dew and sun which so gently and yet so authoritatively evokes the green grass of spring, the buds and flowers of summer, the foliage and fruitage which revolutionize the landscape. And thus it was in all respects in which growth was discernible in either of the periods of Church history. It would have accorded better with human inclination, no doubt, to have had a Messiah who should have forcibly revolutionized the world, Mohammed like, or who should have stretched out a magic wand and metamorphosed the sinner into a saint. But we have no such Messiah. He was in no haste to establish and complete his Church, but could himself, all his days, worship in a synagogue and leave time and the spirit he should send to complete his work. Men gravitated with the most perfect freedom toward the final end, scarcely knowing whither they were going. And so it has been ever since, and is now. The whole line of Christian development has been characterized by the most perfect freedom as between the believer and his Lord. We are distinctly told that we are "called unto freedom."

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Section IX.—The Second Law of Growth.

Individual gifts and, to a limited extent, official distinctions predicated upon these emphasized, not annihilated nor ignored.

There is a tendency in human nature to abuse freedom. Hence inspiration cautions not to use liberty as a cloak of maliciousness, as it is invariably used when one assumes to swing aloof from the guidance of the Holy Spirit or to disregard the rights of his equals in Christ Jesus to do as he pleases,—a sort of free-love raid. We have a good illustration in civil affairs where, because freedom is the genius of our country, men plead it as an excuse for desecrating the Sabbath, violating temperance laws and (unconsciously) for even plundering the public coffers. Our rotten divorce laws and free-love movements are other illustrations of the same thing. We may find illustrations also in the ecclesiastical sphere in a sort of iconoclastic crusade against ancient customs and a growing disregard of Church authority. Deprecatingly says that profound thinker, Horace Bushnell: "All our modern notions and speculations have taken a bent towards individualism."

But the freedom to which we allude neither dictates nor allows of any such abuse. It is a freedom to do and approve what the Spirit of God approves, and nothing more. It runs no crusade against any existing form or custom as such. It obliterates no inborn and God-sanctified individual characteristic. Rather

it emphasizes these characteristics by classifying them and denominating them spiritual gifts as we have seen. It then dictates their place in the Church of God and guards them there as sacredly as it guards the idea of freedom. This is as we should expect. The sun evokes into growth and use the characteristics involved in the germ, not obliterates them under the scorching plea of freedom. Incubation emphasizes the specific characteristics of the fowl it produces from the vital dot of the egg, not annihilates them under the foolish idea that all fowls should be alike in a land of freedom. So the Holy Spirit emphasizes, sanctifies and empowers the different individual gifts or powers men possess, finding for all a place, and for some an official place in the Church. Facts of nature it leaves facts and reverences them, not destroys. Hence in the New Testament Church we find, not only the great fact of spiritual freedom by which Christians are one in Christ Jesus, but also diversities of gifts by which they are not only distinguished from each other, but are qualified for different spheres of usefulness.

Such emphasis is laid upon some of these spiritual gifts, that their possessors are set apart by solemn ordination to the work to which they are adapted, an emphasis which has a restrictive aspect as well as an empowering.

Section X.—The Third Law of Growth.

The free expression of the all-controlling spirit in the Church was aided and, in some sense, guided by certain providentially ordered external influences.

We allude especially to such influences as inspired Apostles, their helpers, the Evangelists, and the existing institutions of the countries in which Christianity flourished. The Apostles were sent for the express purpose of furthering the work of the indwelling Spirit, by giving expression to his mind under a special divine illumination. Thus the free spirit within the masses of believers was aided in the expression of itself in appropriate forms of worship, church constitution, officers, order and discipline. And additional aids and safeguards were also found in the suggestive institutions with which the disciples were familiar, such as the Jewish Synagogue, and the dominant or familiar forms of Pagan government. Should this seem to be a hazardous statement, it will be enough to remind the reader that it was not until the "fullness of the time came," that "God sent forth his Son," and that his dispensation is called "the dispensation of the fullness of times," (Eph. 1: 10). Both the Jewish and Pagan world were in the condition needed to meet the wants of the case. Their languages and their institutions, as well as their philosophies and spirits, were important elements in the account.

Both the Synagogue and the Grecian Democracy report themselves in the Christian Church as is evidenced by the very terms it employs.

The name *Elder* is from the Synagogue, and the name *Church*, ἐππλησία, is from the Democracy, being the name of the assembly that enacted the laws of Athens.

Such are the facts, and Christian faith has only to say: "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Thy sight." If a Pagan nation can serve the Church by giving the language in which its statute book is written, surely it can do so by giving a suggestion as to its government.

Nor is this to infringe upon the freedom of its development. If the same Almighty Spirit who becomes the new life-power of the church member and who inspires the Apostles to be his proxy guide also controlled the affairs of nations so as to order a certain concurrence of institutions or events, then it is no infringement of freedom that, in one way, he furnish a model which, in another way, he has prepared a people to accept. The case is much the same as where a parent, having begotten in his child a certain mechanical or educational proclivity, puts him in circumstances where that proclivity may the more readily embody itself in a trade or profession.

Freedom is not invaded; it is only aided and, it may be, ensured a more speedy gratification of its choice. Of course we all know that with the ordinary amount of inward Spirit-power possessed by Christians, they might, in time, attain to "the promised land" in the matter of the Church constitution, though they should first wander many years in the wilderness. But if they would make a more direct and less hazardous

journey, they must have guides of especial inspiration as well as favorable and suggestive surroundings. And these God was pleased to give, so that now we have assurance made doubly strong, that whatever the constitution of the Church may have been in the second period, it was of divine origin.

Section XI.—The Fourth and last Law of the Church's Growth:

It was not one of experiment, but one of natural though divinely ordered development.

In human government men are left to experiment. Our own Federal Constitution is the result of years of experimentation and suffering want. After the necessities of the Colonies impelled them to form a general alliance, they adopted Articles of Confederation upon which Congress had labored for sixteen months, which were not accepted by all the Colonies until more than three years after they were submitted, and which were then used for only eight years before they were discarded as utterly wanting in adaptation to the wants of the case. Other trying and perplexing years passed before the present Constitution was adopted, and that, after several amendments, is not even now beyond question in all respects. Had the Lord committed his Church Constitution to such a growth, confusion must have been worse confounded than we find it. Nay, infidelity, like some wild nomadic horde, had probably made the ruins of Christ's Church, overgrown with the debris of ages, its camping ground. But the growth to

which he did commit it was of another character entirely. It was like that of fruit which proceeds by steady, straightforward stages and under the control of inflexible law to ripeness; or like that of a child which, in like manner, proceeds from littleness and weakness to a commanding size and power. It was a growth which, in one sense, left the institution perfect at any stage, while in another and higher sense it only finished its perfection with the closing of the canon of inspiration The experimental growth is the human kind, and is always as faulty as the human which controls it. The developmental is the Divine and is always as perfect as the Deity who controls it.

These principles we deem to be of considerable importance in our study of the Church in its fundamental idea and constitution. By exposing the dominance of Divine law, on the one hand, they will guard us against a careless experimental liberalism, while by their exposure of the circumstantial and human as moulding powers, on the other, they will suggest that we pay proper attention to them in our endeavors to arrive at the Divine.

It is a remarkable fact that after the institution known as the Christian Church has been in existence for more than eighteen centuries, and has had more attention, probably, than all other institutions combined, there is no well-established idea of what it is or how it should be defined. "Nearly two chiliads of the Christian era have passed away," said a writer in the *Christian Review* of 1855, "and yet the answers

to this grave inquiry (What is the Church?) are diverse as the dialects of Babel." In an address of Dean Alford upon "The Christianity of the Present and the Future," he names the "want of any well-defined idea of what constitutes the Church" as the second great defect of the present. The diverse answers or ideas alluded to by the writer in the *Review* run, some of them, to the extreme of the formal and some to that of the spiritual,—all agreeing, however, in the lack of an exhaustive analysis. Many even question whether the Church is anything with a definite constitutional structure, confounding all that is said in the New Testament of the Church and the Kingdom of Christ. The *jure divino* doctrine retains a comparatively slight hold on the people.

But it would be surprisingly strange if an institution whose name occurs a hundred and fifteen times in the New Testament, and which was to be "the pillar and ground of the truth," invulnerable to "the gates of the underworld" and the medium through which God's "mystery of ages" was to be revealed "to principalities and powers in heavenly places;" the institution which the Messiah was to build and whose foundation he laid upon the apostles and prophets, himself being the chief corner-stone, and its rising structure divinely said to be "fitly framed together;" the institution whose character was so exalted and whose mission so important that Jesus calls it his "body" or his "bride,"—it would be surprisingly strange, we say, if that institution were so indefinite

in structure as to be incapable of definition and description. The assumption is incredible. We might as well assume that the Messiah himself or his plan of redemption is so indefinite as to be incapable of description. Past failures to define or describe might be accounted for, either on the ground of the exalted nature of the subject, the insufficiency of collected data, the want of attention, or the want of appropriate methods of study. The business of telegraphing was as susceptible of description five thousand years ago as it is to-day, but it was not described. It was not so nearly described as to evolve even the confusion of ideas which now prevails concerning the Church.

Section XII.—How this Volume Treats the Subject.

We now find both advantages and disadvantages, as compared with the past, in treating the subject. We have a history and a confusion of ideas. But before treating the elements which enter into the constitution of the Church, it appears to us to be needful to determine what is its fundamental idea, and we shall, therefore, proceed accordingly. And in doing so, while we shall regard nothing but the Word of the Lord as authoritative, for the purpose of protecting ourselves from the insensible control of current opinion as well as for preparing the way for the positive teachings of the word, we shall first trace the history of ideas upon the Church and then try to reduce the confusion which exists in most minds concerning the

relation of the Church to the Kingdom of Christ. Afterwards we will return to the positive instructions of the Word and see if we can find a straight path for our feet through its uses of the term *ecclesia*.

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PART FIRST.

THE FUNDAMENTAL IDEA OF THE CHURCH.

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PART FIRST.

CHAPTER I.

THE HISTORIC IDEAS OF THE CHURCH.

IN seeking for the ideas of the church which have prevailed in history, we of course pass the initial or Apostolic period, that being the fountain whose waters we and history alike propose to analyze, and our present inquiry respecting the analysis which history has actually made. Suffice it to say, that we believe the manifest use of the term *church*, (ἐκκλησία) in the local sense ninety-two out of a hundred and fifteen times of its occurrence in the New Testament, is significant of a precise and ascertainable meaning.

SECTION I.—NON-DEFINING PERIOD.

Passing the Apostolic period, we come to a time in which "no exact definitions concerning the nature of the church are found," the period whose general character is that of "abstract indefiniteness." It extends to the time of Cyprian, bishop of Carthage, or about the middle of the third century. It gives to the world the phrase *Holy Catholic Church*, which has played so conspicuous a part in the ecclesiastical world, though not in the clearly defined meaning which was afterward attached to it, if we may say that it even included it at all. The term first occurs in the year 169 A. D., in

the Encyclical Epistle of the Church of Smyrna concerning the martyrdom of its beloved pastor, the renowned Polycarp, and is as follows: "The Church of God which sojourns at Smyrna, to the Church of God sojourning in Philomelium, and to all the congregations (παροικίαις) of the holy and catholic church in every place." The term *catholic* (καθολικὸς) means general or universal, but whether, in this case, general in the sense of *collective*, that is, the unorganized collection of all local churches like those of Smyrna and Philomelium, or of an organized *universal* in the Romish sense, is the question,—a question which can be answered only by an appeal to the usage of terms at that time. In another place we shall attempt to show what usage determines, but for the present will content ourselves with saying, that the period was wanting in definitions. It was given to the apologetic defense of christianity before a hostile pagan world which was often ready to sweep it from the earth as with the besom of destruction, and therefore attention was not given to an institution which had been received in tact from the hands of Apostolic builders until the process of change, from the force of circumstances, had proceeded far enough to demand attention. And even then attention was given only to those features which were involved in the changes occurring.

Section II.—Universal Church Period.

Changes were in progress, however, which would force attention to the church institution. The eleva-

tion of bishops above presbyters, the confederation of churches under synods, the emphasis laid upon metropolitan bishops, and other causes, were slowly but surely working a revolution whose spirit and tendency we may gather from views expressed by Cyprian at the close of the controversy with Felicissimus, when certain North African bishops sent delegates to Rome with a number of charges against Cyprian which they wished to have prosecuted before that church. In opposition to the delegates, Cyprian urged the Roman bishop to defend against the schismatics *the unity of the church founded upon the union of the bishops;* that is, the bishops who in synod assembled had previously decided the case between him and Felicissimus. He also insisted upon "the inviolable authority of the bishop ordained of God, and declares it impiety for any man to set himself up as judge over the *judicium Dei et Christi.*" (*Neander's Church History*, *I*, 235.) His views are thus summed up by Neander from his work *De Imitate Ecclesiae:* "Christ communicated to the Apostles, the Apostles to the bishops by ordination, the power of the Holy Ghost; by the succession of the bishops, the power of the Holy Ghost, whence alone all religious acts can receive their efficacy, is extended, through the channel of this outward transmission, to all times. Thus is preserved in this organism of the church, ever unfolding itself with a living progression, that divine life, which, flowing from the Fountain Head through this point of mediation, is thus distributed through all the members united with the organic whole; and whoever breaks off his connection with this

outward organism, does, by so doing, exclude himself from participating in that divine life, and from the way to salvation. No one, by himself alone, can, by faith in the Saviour, have any share in the divine life that flows from him ; no one can, by this faith alone, secure to himself all the blessings of God's Kingdom ; but all this remains necessarily mediated through these organs and the connection with them,—the connection with the Catholic Church derived from Christ through the succession of bishops." (*Ch. Hist.*, *I.*, 210). His views accorded with those of Ireneus as expressed in the terse sentence : "*Ubi ecclesia, ibi et spiritus.*" (Where the church is, there is the spirit). Thus we see clearly revealed both the hierarchical and sacramental tendencies which ripened in the externalized *Catholic* or *Universal Church* constitution.

In the Novatian controversy, which soon followed at Rome, these tendencies were greatly strengthened. Novatian made "purity and holiness" essential marks of a true church, and therefore unchurched any ecclesiastical body which did not maintain "the right exercise of discipline." The opponents of Novatian predicated purity and holiness upon the mediation, in an orderly manner, of a succession of bishops. He laid stress upon subjective or inward holiness ; they upon objective or sacramental. With him pure members needful to pure church ; with them a pure church, one "transmitted and propagated by a succession of bishops," to pure members. His opponents, moving with the tide of events in that age, tri-

umphed, and the Roman Church was fully committed to the Cyprian theory.

The Donatist controversy, which began in the early part of the third, and did not cease until the sixth century, was a substantial repetition of the same thing. The Donatists, like the Novatians, insisted upon purity in order to sacramental communion or churchhood; the Catholic party, as represented in the Council of Arles, (A. D. 314), "that the validity of a sacramental act depended on the fact that the performer of it was a member of the Catholic Church." (*Neand. Ch. His., Vol. II.*, 190). It was the old contest between inward or subjective purity guarded by wholesome church discipline, and sacramental or subjective administered by the succession. "According to the *Catholic point of view*, to the essence of the genuine Catholic church belonged its general spread through the medium of the Episcopal succession down from the Apostles." (*Neahd. Ch. His., II.*, 208).

It only needed now the completion of the hierarchical pyramid, which was in process of erection, by adding the needful division and gradation of prelates, with a Pontifex Maximus as the crowning head, and the frame work of *the universal church* is complete. Not to dwell upon the method, suffice it to say that, by a perfectly natural course of events, the bishop of Rome, the chief metropolis of the world, was made the head, and thus completed the idea of the universal church, whose unity was one of externals, and which ruled the world until the Reformation of the sixteenth century. Many reformers, like those already noticed,

arose to protest against it, but, like their predecessors, failed to uproot the idea. Like them, also, they generally made personal purity the point of opposition, adding, sometimes, an anti-hierarchical movement; but they seldom went to the bottom of the true church idea. Thus John Huss defined the church as the "*Universitas predestinatorum*," or the "*Congregation* (sum total) *of believers*," in which definition Wessel and Wickliffe both concurred. (*Smith's Chron. Tables*, *p.* 49, *m.*) Wickliffe's more expanded definition was as follows:

"Christ's Church is His spouse that hath three parts. The first part is in bliss with Christ, the head of the church, and containeth angels and blessed men that be now in heaven. The second part of the church be saints in purgatory, and these sin not anew, but purge their old sins. The third part of the church are true men that here live, that shall be afterwards saved in heaven, and who live here the life of christian men. The first part is called the *overcoming* part, the middle is called the *sleeping*, the third is called the *fighting;* and all these make one church, and the head of this church is Jesus Christ, both God and man. This church is mother to every man that shall be saved, and containeth no other." (*Punchard's Hist. Cong.*, *I.*, 278).

Power was too much for purity in this contest, until the fullness of time came. The universal church idea triumphed over all its foes. Authoritatively defined by Cardinal Bellarmine, (A. D. 1542–1621), it stands as follows:

"Our opinion is, that the church is *one* whole, not two, and that that one and true church is an assembly" (*coetus;* mark the extended use of the term which appears in Wickliffe's "Congregation," and also in the later Protestant Confessions of Faith) "joined together by profession of the same christian faith and participation of the same sacraments, under the rule of lawful pastors, and especially of Christ's only vicar in the world, the Roman Pontiff.

"From which definition we are easily able to infer what men belong to the church and what do not belong to it. For there are three parts to this definition: Profession of the true faith, participation of the sacraments and subjection to the lawful pastor,—the Roman Pontiff. By reason of the first part, all unbelievers are excluded, as well as they who were never in the church, such as Jews, Turks and Pagans, and they who were in but went back, such as heretics and apostates. By reason of the second, catechumens are excluded, and the excommunicated, seeing they are not admitted to participation of the sacraments, are dismissed. By reason of the third, schismatics are excluded who hold the faith and sacraments, but are not subject to the lawful pastor, and, therefore, from without profess the faith and receive the sacraments. But all others are included, even if they are reprobate, abominable and impious.

"And this is the difference between our opinion and all others,—that all others require internal virtue in order to admission into the church, and, moreover, make the true church invisible; but we believe all virtues are

to be found in the church,—faith, hope, love, *et cet.*; yet, that we may in some manner be called a part of the true church concerning which the Scriptures speak, we do not think that any internal virtue is required, but only an outward profession of faith and a participation of the sacraments, which is received by mere sense. For the church is an assembly of men as visible and palpable as the assembly of the Roman people or the kingdom of Gaul, or the republic of the Venetians." (*Hag. His. of Doct's, II.*, 291.)

Section III.—The Invisible Church Period.

Martin Luther, denying that the Church of Rome, which had arrogated to itself the title Holy Catholic or Universal Church, was the true church, was asked: "Where then is it?" He replied: "It is invisible," thus originating a designation of the church which has very extensively, I might almost say universally, ruled the Protestant christian world until this day. The thought was not new, but the expression. When Ireneus said: "Where the church is, there is the Spirit," he immediately added what some of his exponents, with a modified idea, quote to this day as the definition of the true church,—"Where the Spirit of God is, there is the church." All through the controversies alluded to, the idea of the invisible church seemed to be struggling for expression. It was in the minds of Novatian and the Donatists when they advocated purity and holiness in order to the church relation. And could Augustine have uttered and logically

defended it as did Luther, Neander thought it might have led to an agreement between him and the Donatists. (*Hag. His. Doc's, I.*, 354). The idea was in the minds of Huss and Wessel when they defined the church as "the congregation of believers." It was in the mind of Wickliffe when he said of the church he described: "This church is the mother of every man that shall be saved and containeth no other." But the force of that strange spell, a name, remained for Luther to impart.

This invisible church is variously designated and described in our time, as for example, *the Church Universal* of Protestant writers upon church polity, the bifaced or *Invisible and Visible* church of the confessions, *the Communion of Saints*, *the Household of Faith* and *the church* simply of common parlance. The only difference in these designations, save that of infants introduced into the visible church of some of the confessions, is that some of them cover both the saints on earth and those in heaven, while others, like the original invisible, cover only those on earth. But for our purposes in the present discussion this difference is immaterial, and we will, therefore, without reference to it, use the term *invisible* as our description of that idea of the church which succeeded the universal in authority and has so extensively dominated the Protestant world from Luther's day to this. The contrast which it presents with the Romish universal is that between spirit and form, the invisible having no outward organization, and hence finding its unity in internals of character, while the universal is

thoroughly organized, and hence finds its unity in externals. Particular local churches are but organized fragments of it.

Luther's idea was thus expressed in the Augsburg Confession, drawn up by Melancthon and adopted A. D. 1530:

"The church is *the congregation of saints* in which the gospel is rightly taught and the sacraments rightly administered."

It is still more clearly expressed in the "Apology of the Confession," drawn up also by Melancthon in the same year, and occupying, according to Winer, "the first place among the symbols of the Lutheran church!" According to this, the article in the confession "calls the church Catholic, that we should understand, not that the church is an external polity of certain nations, but rather that it is *men scattered through the whole earth* who agree concerning the gospel, and have the same Christ, the same Holy Spirit and the same sacraments, whether they have the same traditions or dissimilar ones."

The term "*congregation*" in the confession means the same as "men scattered through the whole world" in the Apology, and the idea thus expressed is common to Lutheran writers. Thus Dr. Schaff defines the church as "the organic unity of all believers." (*Apostolic Church*, *p.* 7), Lange, as "the planting and development of the salvation and life of Christ in the social sphere," and "the typical commencement of the world's transfiguration," (*Hag. His. Doct.*, *II.*, 511). Dr. Stahl: "Our doctrine is that the communications of divine

grace are promised to the soul only in the church. But the church is not a merely external institution; it is a kingdom consisting in the influences and operations of inward spiritual forces." Those speculative philosophers, Hegel and Marheineke, lean in the same direction, only a little further, when they speak of the church "as God existing in the congregation," or, "as the religious side of the State." (*Hag. His. Doct., II.*, 511).

The Reformed Church of Switzerland which issued the Confession of Basle in 1534, held the same view. They say:

"We acknowledge a holy christian church, *i. e.* the communion of saints, the spiritual assembly of believers, which is holy, and an offspring of Christ, of which all those are citizens who truly confess that Jesus is the Christ, the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world, and who give evidence of their faith by works of love."

In their Helvetic Confession, drawn up two years later, they say:

"It must needs be that there has been, there is, and shall be a church, *i. e.* a congregation of faithful men called out and gathered from the world, a communion of *all saints*, of those forsooth who, through the Word and Holy Spirit, really know and rightly serve the true God in Christ the Saviour; in fine, share by faith in all the blessings freely conferred through Christ."

The Gallic Confession, issued under Calvin's personal influence, by the Synod of Paris, in 1559, said:

"We believe that the only church is the Catholic or Universal, which is a holy congregation or an assembly

of truly faithful christians, who expect their whole salvation in Jesus Christ, having been washed in His own blood and sanctified and sealed by His spirit. This holy church is *not located in or limited to a certain place*, or bound to certain and peculiar persons, *but through the whole world is scattered and diffused.*"

The Westminister Confession of 1646, adopted by the Synod of Cambridge, New England, in 1648, by the Presbyterian Church in America in 1729, and mainly by the Congregationalists of New England in 1680, speaks thus:

"The Catholic or universal church, which is invisible, consists of the whole number of the elect that have been, are, or shall be gathered into one, under Christ the head thereof, and is the spouse, the body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all."

The visible church of this Confession is "also Catholic or universal," consisting "of all those throughout the world that profess the true religion together with their children," and is therefore but a dim and somewhat perverted reflection of the invisible. So far as distinctness or unity of church organization is concerned, it is as invisible as could well be conceived.

The thirty-nine articles of the Church of England, drawn up by Cranmer and Ridley in 1551, and adopted by the Protestant Episcopal Church of America, as well as furnishing the doctrinal basis of the Methodist Episcopal Church, are an exception to the general tendency we are considering, though using almost verbatim the language of the Augsburg Confession in their definition of the church. The reten-

tion of the episcopate and the doctrine of the succession, as well as the sacramental leaning of those who adopt them, commits them to the idea of an external rather than an internal unity.

The early Baptist confessions, partaking of the spirit of their times and ante-dating certain modern discriminations, were more favorable to the invisible idea than the later ones. That of the "seven churches of London in 1643" involves, though it does not as clearly state it as does that of "many congregations" in 1689. It runs as follows:

"Jesus Christ hath here on earth a spiritual kingdom which is His church, whom He hath purchased and redeemed to Himself as a peculiar inheritance; which church is a company of visible saints, called and separated from the world by the word and Spirit of God, to the visible profession of the faith of the gospel, being baptized into that faith and joined to the Lord, and each to other by mutual agreement, in the practical enjoyment of the ordinances commanded by Christ, their head and King." (*Cutting's Vindications*, 121).

The article is a little ambiguous, on the one hand making the church synonymous with the kingdom, which is the invisible church idea, and on the other treating it as though it were a local "company of visible saints," which is quite another idea. This ambiguity doubtless arose from the same source from which frequent ambiguities still arise,—the presence of two ideas in the mind, and a failure to perceive their logical relations to each other as partners in a system.

But the confession of 1689, adopted also by the Philadelphia Association of this country, in what year is not certain, but probably at or soon after its organization in 1707, is not ambiguous. It says:

"The Catholic or universal church, which (with respect to the internal work of the Spirit and the truth of grace) may be called invisible, consists of the whole number of the elect that have been, are or shall be gathered into one under Christ, the head thereof; and may be called the spouse, the body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all." (*Cutting's Vindications*, 167).

While, therefore, other statements in this confession emphasize the local church idea, there can be no doubt as to its position upon the invisible. Nor can there be any more doubt as to the position of many prominent individual Baptist writers of later times.

Dr. Dagg means the invisible church as it has been defined when he says: "The church universal is the whole company of those who are saved by Christ." (*Church Order*, *p.* 100).

Prof. Henry J. Ripley says of what he calls the third New Testament use of the term ἐκκλησία: "It designates the followers of Christ viewed collectively, as separate from the world in religious respects, and united among themselves by faith in Christ and the hope of salvation." (*Church Polity*, *p.* 25).

Rev. J. M. Pendleton, D. D., says the term *church* "refers either to a particular congregation of saints, or to the redeemed in the aggregate." (*Church Manual*, *p.* 5).

Rev. Wm. Evarts, D. D., says: "In its most comprehensive and important sense, the whole number of the redeemed called out from the world and separated to Christ compose the calling or church of Christ, the church for which he died, for which he intercedes, &c."

But while such quotations show conclusively that the modern Baptists have always fostered the invisible church idea, it would be decidedly wrong to infer that all are agreed in doing so, or that the drift of opinion has been in that direction. The New Hampshire Articles of Faith, which are very generally adopted by the Baptist churches of this country, for some significant cause make no allusion to the invisible church, unless an article upon a visible church be interpreted as implying it.

The Rev. J. C. Breaker, upon the New Testament use of *ἐκκλησία*, says:

"In every place where the word occurs, it means either a particular local congregation of professed christians or the whole body of the professed disciples of Christ,—that is, the aggregate, not of the churches, but of the membership of all the local churches. Men are added to "the church universal" by becoming members of the local churches. No man can be a member of the church universal who is not a member of a regular local gospel church,—a church built upon the model of those established by Christ and his Apostles, according to the specific terms of His commission to His Apostles. *Matt.* XXVIII: 19, 20." (*Chr. Rev.* XXII: 607.) Mr. Breaker's universal differs

from the common Protestant universal or invisible in that it contains none but members of *bona fide* local churches.

The author of Theodosia Earnest, one of the most popular works ever issued on the Baptist side of church ideas, adheres rigidly to the local and generic uses of the term church, saying, "this institution is not the kingdom, but an organization within the kingdom, like the court or jury within the State." He allows no place for the church-invisible idea.

We thus see that while the great Baptist body has given continuous and strong support to the invisible idea, it is in an unsettled condition, with one hand holding to the idea of Luther, Calvin and the reformers of the 16th century generally, and with the other reaching after the exclusively local or particular church idea as something whose wants and claims it more and more deeply feels, but is not quite prepared logically and heroically to assert, conscious, no doubt, that there is some difficulty in holding both ideas.

Nor ought we to insinuate that the other bodies whose creeds we have quoted are wholly and unequivocally devoted to the invisible idea, for their varied uses of terms, to indicate an organized church, as well as their varied ideas of an organized church under the same terms, indicate a purpose, though a tremulous one, to support other than the invisible idea. This purpose, however, unlike the Baptist, we judge to have been weakening with the lapse of time. But, however this may be, there can be, we think, no doubt that the invisible church idea, or the universal in the sense of the

invisible, has dominated the period under consideration and, in conflict with the local idea especially, has brought us to the present, which we shall denominate,

Section IV.—The Period of Confusion.

It needs no great penetration to see, that with at least ninety-two (92) out of one hundred and fifteen (115) New Testament uses of ἐκκλησία plainly in favor of the definite, local idea, there could not continue a a thorough contentment with the invisible as the primary and ruling sense if such contentment could exist at all. Nor does it need more than a casual survey of the creeds to discover, that while the invisible took the lead and nearly swept the ground, the local was gradually acquiring influence until now the conflict between them as well as between them and the universal is fairly upon us. Some of the earlier Protestant creeds do not even mention the visible church, their nearest approach to the local, while the later ones as seldom omit it and sometimes do not mention the invisible. The Gallic Confession already quoted as saying: "We believe the only church is catholic or universal," (Protestant universal), thus stands in marked contrast with the New Hampshire articles which do not even mention the invisible. Moreover the term *visible*, which primarily covers about the same ground as the term *invisible*, that is, like it is catholic or universal, becomes limited, in some of its later uses, to the narrow scope of the local church. Such is the limitation, as also that of the term *congregation* which we have seen to have had a very broad sense, in the New Hampshire

articles upon "a gospel church," which read: "We believe the Scriptures teach that a visible church of Christ is a congregation of baptized believers, *et cet.*" The period of confusion, therefore, was inevitable as the result of two such diverse streams of thought intermingling. To show the confusion more completely, we will quote a few more of the ideas of the church which, as the fruits of conflict, are now boiling in the ecclesiastical cauldron.

John Locke, with sufficient looseness, said: "A church I take to be a voluntary society of men, joining themselves together of their own accord, in order to the public worshipping of God in such a manner as they judge acceptable to Him and effectual to the salvation of their souls."

In the same line of loose thinking, Thomas K. Beecher is quoted as saying: "By and by men will get to seeing, that an association of christian people for christian ends is a church," defining the term *christian* in neither case, but, in illustration of his idea, advising Young Men's Christian Associations to call themselves churches.

Swedenborgians, after their leader, teach that "a man who is in faith in the Lord and in charity to his neighbor, is a church in particular; the church in general is composed of those similar;" or, varying the phraseology, that "the church is in man; the church which is without man, is a church composed of many in whom the church is." According to them the church is everywhere where the word of God is rightly

understood. (*True Chr. Rel. Sec.* 767. *Cf. Hag. His. Doct., II.*, 510).

Charles Kingsley's theory, briefly stated, is, that "the world is called the church, when it recognizes its relation to God in Christ and acts accordingly. The church is the world lifting itself up into sunshine; the world is the church falling into shadow and darkness." (*Madison Av. Lect's, p.* 71).

Frederick Denison Maurice teaches, that the church is "that portion of the human family who, being baptized unto Christ, have come truly to know God, that He is their Father. It is they in whom He is revealed. They do acknowledge that God is in them, and has redeemed them in Christ. All men are thus redeemed; but the church consists of those who acknowledge this blessed fact." (*Bib. Sac.* XXII: 673).

Rothe varies the broad and loose conception still further, by conceiving the church and state as interiorly united, so that the former is needed only so long as the latter is incomplete in its development. "The church as a distinct body must also recede and be dissolved just in proportion as the state approximates to the perfection of its development." (*Hag. His. Doct's, II.*, 511).

Zinzendorf and John Wesley, whose aims at reform were much alike, have made us familiar with *ecclesiola in ecclesia*,—churchlets in churches, or little hospital churches for the great sick ones.

Prof. Samuel Harris, of the theological department of Yale College, says: "A church is an organized association of persons redeemed by the Holy Spirit."

Minus the universal and sacramental idea, his view is the same as that of Ireneus already quoted,—"where the spirit of the Lord is, there is the church." (*Bib. Sac.* XXIX: 118–137.) This view underlies the current christian union movements, and was strongly expressed by a writer in the "Union Advocate" of New York, in giving an account of a union meeting held by the three leading churches of Milford, Ohio. The ministers of those churches were agreed, he said, that "the church is the communion of saints, the household of faith," meaning, of course, not a real local church household and communion, but that unreal one which is imagined to comprise all saints.

In marked contrast with such views, as well as with their own position upon the invisible or universal church, those who adopt the Westminister Confession say: "The visible church, which is also catholic or universal under the gospel, (not confined to one nation as before under the law), consists of all those throughout the world that profess the true religion, together with their children." The invisible church consists only of the actually saved, the visible of both saved and unsaved, together with their children. Unto this visible church, moreover, Christ is said to have "given the ministry, oracles, and ordinances of God, for the gathering and perfecting of the saints, in this life, to the end of the world," although it is manifest that it has and can have no organization any more than the invisible. Indeed the confession senses this fact, and hence introduces us to a third class of

churches, the "particular," which are organized. (*Cf. Calvin's Institutes*, IV. 1).

In no less marked a contrast with the views quoted, are those Baptist views already quoted in part, and which Dr. Crowell condenses in the following definition of a church:

"A company of professed believers, baptized on the profession and evidence of their faith, united in a holy covenant to observe the teachings and execute the will of Christ." (*Hand Book, p.* 31).

Dr. S. F. Smith pushes these views to a very definite point, as respects the constitution of a church or the local idea, when, in answer to the question: "Is the Baptist church a schism?" he replies: "We maintain that the Baptist church is the church of Christ, and the only church of Christ on earth." But Dr. J. M. Pendleton sharpens the point by changing Dr. Smith's sentence so as to have it read: "We maintain that the Baptist churches are the only churches of Christ on earth." (Extract from the *Richmond Herald.*) But he also adds to the prevalent confusion, if not to his own, by teaching, as before quoted, in contrast with such doctrine, that the church is "the redeemed in the aggregate."

Adding now the Romish universal theory, which is still struggling for supremacy, and also the various current notions of a national and denominational church, it is easy to see that the pendulum of thought traverses an arc filled with the wildest confusion, going from the extreme of blankest externality, on the one hand, to that of the most meagerly defined spirituality

on the other; from the three orders of the priesthood as the framework of the church and hope of the world to an undefined and ever-changing inward condition. The church universal, the church invisible, the church local, the church in a single man, the church national, the church denominational, the church the religious side of the state and doomed to gradual evaporation, the church the sunny side of the world, the church organized and the church unorganized, the church a monad and the church a discordant triad, the church a *jure divino* institution and the church a *non jure divino* institution; these and we know not how many other kinds of churches are all struggling for recognition as the church of Christ. The battle is the great battle of our times, to which the contests about ordinances and christian union are but preliminary skirmishing. The contestants, though seldom comprehending the nature of the contest and of the results involved, are very eager and active. Almost every christian man, woman and child is hard at work on one or the other side of what is mainly a triangular contest between the universal, the invisible and the local church ideas.

Section V.—The Result of the Conflict.

What the result will be, time will tell, as would also, doubtless, a correct exegesis of the Word if it could be reached. What the universal idea has done, we know. It has whelmed the christian world in a night as dark as paganism and as bloody as a slaughter-house. The human acquiring the ascendency in the system, like

paganism has doled out the human instead of the divine, albeit great pretensions concerning divinity have attended its manipulations. What the invisible idea can or will do, we see now to some extent and will see better, doubtless, in the future. If our perception is good and our logic sound, it will lead, nay is leading, by another and to the pious a more promising route to substantially the same goal as that of its predecessor,—moral and spiritual degeneracy. The one, by its iron-framed formalism, stretches the spiritual life out of men, leaving them but the ghastly skeletons of christians; the other, by its elimination of the necessary conditions of spirituality, is doing substantially the same thing. Neither of them preserves Paul's "unity of the spirit" as a constitutional basis of churchhood, and consequently neither tends strongly toward "the unity of the faith" into which the Apostle intended and the Saviour, as we suppose, prayed his disciples might grow, or be perfected. The local idea is yet to be fully developed and tried. It has hitherto assumed but a very misty form. It is the last church idea the human mind would naturally embrace, because it is the most perfect, and hence the latest for conscious and purposed culture. Nor have its friends always treated it consistently or scripturally, the ground they have traveled having been comparatively new and surrounding ideas having furnished so many influences to deflect the line of thought. But it is now unquestionably in the ascendant and is, doubtless, to have its trial. Possibly it may prove to be the golden fleece of which ecclesiastical Argonauts are in pursuit.

CHAPTER II.

THE CHURCH DISTINGUISHED FROM THE KINGDOM.

IN neither the *universal* (Roman Catholic) nor the *invisible* (Protestent Universal) idea of the church is there supposed to be any distinction between the church and the kingdom of Christ. Both are supposed to cover all saints. Their identity, moreover, is commonly asserted, as may be seen by reference to such confessions and definitions, as have already been adduced, or to writers upon church polity and current topics.

In many respects, of course, they are identical, both having common doctrines, common purposes of grace and a common head or king. But this does not render them identical as wholes. And now that the local idea of the church has begun to lift its head in such prominence above the agitations of the past, it is high time the subject were carefully canvassed. If they are identical, they are right who say, "The wide view of the church as the total of believers, the whole kingdom of Christ on earth, is the original one; the narrower sense of the term, in which it denotes a particular local congregation, as the church of Corinth or of Rome, is the derived." (*Schaff's Apos. Ch., p.* 500). Then too the local body should, of course, be simply a reflection of the larger and more important,

and should make no requirements of its members which are not equally laid upon all in the larger. Such practices as strict communion or ecclesiastical non-intercourse in any form, are utterly untenable, and such writers as Dr. Dagg, who defines the church universal as "the whole company of those who are saved by Christ," are quite illogical, not to say burdensome, when they make baptism "a prerequisite to membership in a local church;" for why require in the inferior and derived body what is not essential to the superior and original? But if the church and the kingdom are not identical, in any view of the former, it may transpire that the local idea of the church is the original, and that, instead of abating local church ordinances or usages, in deference to a greater than that body, we should be even more stringent because of the dependence of the apparently greater upon the less.

The phrases, *Kingdom of God*, *Kingdom of Heaven*, *Kingdom of Christ*, or simply *kingdom* as an abbreviation of either, are commonly, though not universally, synonymous. When it is said (*Ps.* CIII: 19), "Jehovah has established His throne in the heavens, His kingdom rules over all," or when the reign of God after the Son "delivers up the kingdom" is referred to, (1 *Cor.* XV: 24), a reign different in some senses from Christ's Mesianic is meant. But when this reign is referred to, whether under the name of the Son or the Father, one or more of three forms of thought are in the mind, we suppose, viz:

1. Christ's spiritual dominion as affecting all whom it influences, whether for the better or worse, as when

it is said, "the kingdom of heaven is like a net cast into the sea which gathers of every kind," (*Matt.* XIII: 47), or, "He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet," (1 *Cor.* XV: 25), His friends of course being exalted; or,

2. That dominion in its exclusive saving effects upon those who are born of the Spirit and thus enter the kingdom; or,

3. The future resultant of this, in the blissful reign of God the Father over all Christ's subjects made willing in the day of his power.

The term *church* awakens no such sweep of thought, and we shall now proceed to show some of the things in which the institution it names differs from the kingdom, having more especial reference to the second sense of the kingdom specified.

SECTION I.—IT DIFFERS IN THE DATE OF ITS BEGINNING.

According to the prophet Daniel (II: 44), it was in the days of certain future kings the God of heaven was to set up a kingdom which should never be destroyed, which prophecy was fulfilled at the beginning of Christ's mediatorial work upon earth, as is indicated by both John the Baptist and Himself, who concurred in saying, "the kingdom of heaven is at hand." (*Matt.* III: 2; X: 7). But at a considerably later period the building of the church was still in the future. (*Matt.* XVI: 18). Its visible existence, as we have before shown, can not be dated earlier than the day of Pentecost, subsequent to Christ's ascension, and its

completion not until a period still later. While Christ was the chief corner-stone of the institution, Apostles whose work only fairly began after His ascension, were mainly the architects, especially Peter and Paul, the leaders of the Jewish and Gentile wings of the sacramental host. But Apostles had nothing to do in setting up the kingdom of God. They stood spiritually related to it as we all stand naturally related to creation,—non-existent until the work is done.

Section II.—In Members

The difference is equally marked. The members of the kingdom are vastly more numerous than those of the church. Multitudes, under the ministries of John the Baptist and the Saviour, had entered before the church had a substantial existence. Other multitudes, who, like the thief on the cross, accept of Christ in the dying hour without having any opportunity for baptism, will come up to the paradise of God from all the Christian ages. Of such as infant children, too, is the kingdom of heaven, though the New Testament furnishes us no proof that such ever entered the church. Then if we allow any distinction between churches in name and churches in fact, we shall doubtless have to concede that not a few members of the former have been, are, and will be in the kingdom, though never in a *bona fide* Christian church.

But the distinction we are making is not wanting, we think, in a clear scriptural recognition. Among the notable things to which the believer in Christ has come—not will come—are two classes or conditions of

"the first born who are enrolled in heaven"—one denominated "*the General Assembly*," πανήγυρις, and the other "*the Church*," ἐκκλησία. The first of these terms was used to designate the immense unorganized multitudes who convened to celebrate the Greek national games, a festive term including all ages, sizes, ranks and conditions. The second is the name of that select company known as citizens who, in the Grecian democracies or free cities, enjoyed the elective franchise and controlled the interests of the public. When then the Holy Spirit divides the first born on earth into these two classes, he can allude only to the distinction we are making between the members of the kingdom and those of the church. The ordinary conception which makes the terms synonymous, and refers them to the heavenly state, will not do. Clearly they are not synonymous, and they refer to the earthly. The first-born are not said to be in heaven, but only to be enrolled there. Besides, the whole connected description refers to things with which believers come into new relations here. They *have come* to Mount Zion, *et cet.*, as really as Moses and the Israelites, with whom they are contrasted, did come to Mount Sinai, which, unlike Mount Zion, can be "touched." (*Heb.* XII: 18–24.)

The same distinction is implied, we think, in *Matt.* XVI: 18, 19: "And I also say to thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of the underworld shall not prevail against it. And I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth

shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

Here the kingdom in existence and the church to be built, though both on earth, stand in contrast with each other. And evidently the point of the contrast is this: The power of the keys or the power of binding and loosing with which Peter is here emphatically, though not exclusively, invested, (*Matt.* XVIII: 18, *John* XX: 23), enables him, as one, on whom the church is, in some sense, to be built, to enter the great storehouse of the kingdom, take its raw, or uncultured, disciple material, organize and put it to work under such a church constitution, and hence in such ways, as will be approved in heaven. He is invested with this power emphatically, because as an apostle he has to take the initiatory in the work. But his and his Lord's object is the same as that of the church organization itself, viz: that its members, put under a process of training, may attain, as they could not otherwise, to "the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." (*Eph.* IV: 11–13). Thus the members of the kingdom and those of the church stand related to each other as the raw material to the wrought fabric,—differing in both bulk or numbers and quality.

SECTION III.—ORGANIZATION.

The kingdom is sometimes spoken of as organized, having a king, a code of laws, and an executive body (the church) for administering the laws. (*Theodosia Earnest, II.*, 46, 47.) This is all very well, provided

the right ideas be attached to such terms. The kingdom, consisting for essence in "righteousness, joy and peace in the Holy Spirit," and having no business gatherings of its subjects for any purpose whatever, could hardly be said to be organized in any ordinary sense of that term. Its King is not an ordinary king, either in person, rule or method of rule. Upon being asked by Pilate whether he was a king, he admitted that he was, and indicated the character of his reign by saying: "To this end have I been born, and to this end have I come into the world, that I may bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth hears my voice," (*John* x: 37). But truth's reign is assuredly no ordinary administration of the kingly office. The reign of ideas and the reign of a temporal power are two so dissimilar things as hardly to be called alike parts of an organization. Moreover, the code of laws which the kingdom possesses is not a code of laws which the kingdom as an organized body either accepts or enforces. Not even does it elect, or appoint, or officially accept the church as its executive. For illustration's sake, it may be very well to talk of its organization, but in fact it has no external organization whatever. We can only speak of internal and spiritual relations to Christ and others as the results of the life of Christ and the rule of His truth in the members.

But in the case of the church, we can say as to its internal, all we have said of the kingdom, and add, that it has a *bona fide* external organization, whose form of government, officers, constitutional doctrines, ordi-

nances and rules of discipline are specifically given. No combination of men nameable can be more completely organized. Some of the figurative designations of the church look especially toward organization; such as the *one body* with many members and diverse gifts, a *temple* or a *fitly framed building*, *et cetera*. As the executive of the kingdom, it is a volunteer, save so far as a divine call may modify that idea. Indeed the kingdom, as such, does nothing. The church is the only organized Christian institution known to the New Testament for doing anything.

Section IV.—Nature.

In nature, both have some things in common; we may say the fundamental things, which give their great value to either, such as the righteousness, joy and peace in the Holy Spirit, which constitute or characterize the life of each. But when we have said this, we must immediately begin to distinguish between them, for while they correspond in these internals, the church embodies or externalizes them as the kingdom does not. In kingdom-men, they exist simply as the blessings or characteristics of individuals not related organically to other individuals; in church-men, they exist not only as individual characteristics, but also as the characteristics of the church organism, the body of Christ, subject hence to new uses and trials. Everything the church does in its organized capacity, will both use and try these kingdom elements as they never would be used or tried, if their possessors had not come into church relations. And this fact is very largely the ex-

planation of the benefit of church life. The Lord's people were intended to be tried as well as used, tried by their church uses, and thus they not only develope in uses and graces, but become happily conscious of their development. Had the Saviour left these elements in their kingdom condition, they had been like steam floating in vapory clouds, neither accumulating nor evincing power; but organized into church relations, they are like steam pressed in the cylinder of the engine, which both accumulates and asserts power beyond all computation.

The kingdom is of such a nature, that it may be spoken of as either entering men or being entered by men. Referring so exclusively to their inward state, it matters not whether we say "the kingdom of God is within you," (*Luke* XVII: 21), or ye must "be born of water and the spirit" in order to enter, (*John* III: 5). But we can speak of the church in no such way. As an organized society or the collective of all such societies, by no possibility of nature can it enter a man. Neither can it, if it be conceived generically as the name of an institution. Swedenborg had utterly confounded the church with the kingdom when he spoke of the church as being *in* a man. A man may be in a church, but a church can no more be in a man than could a mountain. The distinction between the two is much like that between a disembodied and an embodied spirit, the one having neither flesh nor bones, the other having both.

The kingdom is of such a nature that one may enter it when already in it, that is, enter it more deeply; at

least, so the Apostle Paul represents when, to the regenerate Thessalonians, he speaks of God's calling them, in the present tense, "into His kingdom and glory," (1 *Thess.* II: 12). And so the Apostle Peter represents when he speaks to believers with reference to the future, of a richly ministered entrance "into the everlasting kingdom of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ," (2 *Pet.* I: 11). But the church would bear no such representation. Once in it, a deeper entrance or a repeated entrance without going out, would be as impossible as a repeated entrance into a house, state or school without an exit. Here, as before, the externality of the church is the ground of distinction.

Such, again, is the exclusively spiritual nature of the kingdom, that either Apostles or private Christians may rule as kings, even by the side or in royal companionship with the King of glory, (*Luke* XXII: 29-30, *Rev.* III: 21). Royalty and rule are the internals of character, and hence as accessible to every saint as is a hope of heaven. But in the church, notwithstanding spirituality of the highest order exists, spirituality that grades higher than that of the kingdom, because it is cultured or developed by the means of grace peculiar to the church, yet we may speak of neither kings nor lords, save Jesus, because externality here rules our ideas and would endanger some one's lording it over God's heritage. As to the internal man, or as to the exalted nature of common Christian privileges, all the saints are priests and kings; but as to church organization or official church work, none are. (1 *Pet.* V: 3).

The kingdom, as a spiritual power, stands contrasted, by the word, with "the power of darkness" which is also spiritual, while, in the same paragraph, the church appears as a spiritual power embodied, being called "the body" of Christ, and elsewhere and more emphatically "his flesh and bones," (*Col.* 1: 13–18 and *Eph.* v: 30). As Christ was God the Spirit incarnate, so the church would seem to be the spiritual power of His kingdom embodied, or the Son of God, who is "the life" of the kingdom, in a sort of second incarnation. In other words, the church stands related to the kingdom very much as the sacraments of baptism and the supper do to the truths which they embody or symbolize.

In harmony with these views the kingdom was and is to be preached, that is, heralded as glad tidings, (*Luke* IX: 2, 60, *Acts* XXVIII: 23). Not only as covering a system of redemption was it glad tidings suitable for announcement, but more especially as being the righteousness, joy and peace which every human being needs, the ultimate of all religious seeking. But the church is never preached. It may be expounded the same as any social organization, but to proclaim or herald it as the glad tidings would be like a man's preaching himself as the sinner's one thing needful. The church is the preacher of the kingdom, "the bride" of Christ, who says "come," (*Rev.* XXII: 17). Her ministers are among Christ's ascension gifts, intended, not only to build up the body of Christ and render its members impregnable to all the assaults of "cunning craftiness," but, also to extend the empire of Christ through the world, and make even the principal-

ities and powers in the heavenly places know God's manifold wisdom in Christ, (*Eph.* IV: 8–15; III: 10).

And, not to continue needlessly the portrayal of a distinction between the internality of the one's nature and the externality of the other, we conclude this topic by saying that, while entrance to the church is made to depend upon being "saved," (*Acts* II: 47,) or, in other words, upon a profession of faith, or, what is tantamount, the new birth, (*John* I: 12, 13,) entrance to the kingdom is represented as synonymous with being saved, being born again, or eternal life. A man is born into the kingdom by the second birth, but he is not born into the church. To the church he is added upon the suffrages of its members. The new life into which he enters when he enters the kingdom is eternal life begun, but church life is this eternal life at school, (*John* III: 3, *Mark* X: 15, 17, 23). In nature, therefore, there is a marked distinction between the two, notwithstanding both are supposed to cover regenerate souls alike. The one covers them as infants, just born, or without definite respect to their activities; the other as disciples at school, men at work, soldiers in the drill or battle, a bride adorning herself for her husband, *et cetera*.

SECTION V.—OBJECTS IN VIEW.

What we have already said presents, to some extent, their difference in aim or object. But we desire to make the difference a little more apparent. There is a difference in objects pursued kindred to their difference in nature. The kingdom is ultimate, if we except God's

glory. Itself is the highest end which it proposes. Possessing the kingdom in all its boundless sweep of experience, thought and bliss, is the *ultima thula* of human pursuit. But not so with the church. Embody, though it may, the very choicest and most polished elements of the kingdom, still it is always mediate between men and the kingdom, praying them in Christ's stead to be reconciled to God. In some sense it is also mediate between men, whether worldly or kingdom, and God, and hence daily assaults the throne with its ever answering but as yet never answered petition: "Thy kingdom come." It is mediate, moreover, in that it is "the pillar and ground" of kingdom truth, not only supporting it when assailed by its foes, but publishing it as though it were Heaven's appointed publishing house for the world, as indeed it is. Jesus testifies the things of revelation in "the churches," (*Rev.* xxii: 16,) expecting them to publish them as the world may need. In these senses and probably others, the church stands related to the kingdom as its executive, aiming at the extension and deepening of kingdom power, just as schools aim at the extension of the kingdom of letters or brain power, or legislative bodies aim at the conservation of national power, and standing armies at its protection or extension. The kingdom, considered as a collection of spiritual intelligences, proposes nothing. It does not even elect its executive, the church. It simply is, believes, loves, expands, basks in glory. Stretching over the world's continents, islands and oceans like an invisible empire of thought and experience, paying no regard to dynasties or pow-

ers earthly, it receives what Christ and His church may impart. When they agonize in prayer and toil, sweating their great drops of blood, it feels an electric thrill and expands the sweep of its dominion. When they sweep through the eternities on the wings of thought and return laden with theologic lore, it puts on new strength or "comes" with new power. When they and the Holy Spirit say "come," the kingdoms of the world yield up their subjects, and this invisible spiritual empire goes up above the hills and is established in the top of the mountains. It is the spiritual reservoir, they the streams which fill it, making glad the city of God.

SECTION VI.—DESTINY.

We need only add by way of specifications, that their destiny is as different as their beginning or nature. Christ's kingdom is an "everlasting kingdom," and "of his dominion there is no end." His people have received "a kingdom which cannot be shaken," (*Heb.* XII: 28). Its prototype, the Jewish theocracy, was often shaken and at length passed away; the earth with its templed hills and columnar mountains has been shaken, and with heaven itself is to be shaken again, (*Heb.* XII: 26, 27); but the kingdom of Christ is as immovable as the throne of God, made so by the very truth to which its King came to testify and of which He was an embodiment, as well as a preacher, the truth of the Lord which endureth forever. Until truth, righteousness, joy and peace, which are the fun-

damentals of the character of the redeemed, whose life is eternal, cease, this kingdom must stand.

Not so, however, with the church. She embodies these fundamental elements of the kingdom now in the highest degree in which they are to be found on earth, but when the world has been evangelized and the unity of the faith, as well as of the Spirit, has been attained; when Christ has presented to himself His bride, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, her mission as an organization ends. True, glory shall be to God "in the church, in Christ, throughout all ages, world without end," (*Eph.* III: 21), but it will be, not in her organized work continued, but in her perfected elements swallowed up in the kingdom which the Son will deliver up to the Father. Armies will disband when the banners of peace crown all the hills. Schools may close when all know the Lord from the least to the greatest. The streams may forget their beds when the floods of glory sweep over the highest mountain peaks, and a redeemed humanity forever float in the ark of God. The church will give glory to God, in the future eternal ages, as the works of the dead who die in the Lord follow them, not as working processes continued, but as beatific results enjoyed.

SECTION VII.—RECAPITULATION.

These specifications are ample to show that the difference between the church and the kingdom is marked and radical. It runs all through the Word, affecting modes of expression as well as thought.

The Apostle Paul exhorts the Ephesian elders to take care to feed the church, (*Acts* xx: 28), but who would ever speak of feeding the kingdom? The church is a disciplinary body, but not so the kingdom. The church is frequently in the plural; the kingdom never. The church devises and executes; the kingdom does neither. The church is a school with both teachers and pupils; the kingdom schools no one. The church is an organized army in battle array; the kingdom fights no battles and plans no campaigns; it is simply the *espirit de corps*. Though not a genus, the kingdom, like a genus, has the greater *extension*, while the church, like a species, has the greater *comprehension*. To illustrate: *animal* as a generic term, extends so as to cover all animals of every kind, but comprehends only those traits or characteristics which are common to all, that is, the most general. But *man*, a species of animal, extends only so far as the human family extends, while he comprehends mental and moral characteristics, which are possessed by no other species of animals. So the characterizing elements of the kingdom extend to or are found in all true churches within its ample sweep; but the characterizing elements of the churches, as organized and disciplinary bodies, are none of them found in the kingdom. Hence we say that churchmen may be conceived as of a higher order than kingdom men, they representing the wrought while kingdom men represent only the crude material. As to quality of material, the kingdom may be represented by the sap of the sugar maple while coursing its pores or standing in buckets at its feet, while the church is that

same sap in the boiling kettles rapidly changing to a richer and more condensed sweet. The kingdom is the world of floating vapor taken up from the heaving ocean of humanity by the Sun of Righteousness, while the churches are the perennial fountains into which that vapor condenses on the mountain slopes, and which send their streams of blessing athwart the continent in every direction. The kingdom is like a cheering, bewitching, troubling sentiment, that of liberty, if you please, which creeps into myriads of souls scattered over continents and islands and enduring an endless variety of crushing oppressions, while the church is like that same sentiment perfected and taking a tangible and commanding form in the shape of societies, parties or governments, whose aim is not only to conserve and deepen, but also to extend.

Section VIII.—Conclusion.

Thus it appears that the difference is wide and radical,—as radical as that between electricity diffused and powerless, and electricity collected and speaking along the telegraphic wire, or that between a spirit disembodied and to us intangible, and a spirit embodied and controlling educational, governmental or other public affairs. And this view being correct, it follows that "the wide view of the church as the total of believers, the whole kingdom of Christ on earth," so far from being "the original one" from which the narrower sense of the term, in which it denotes a particular local congregation, as the church of Corinth

or of Rome, is the derived, is no view of the church at all, but simply and exclusively a view of the kingdom. Unless, therefore, the *Catholic or universal* and the *invisible church* ideas, which have so long swayed the sentiments of the people, have a better foundation than this to rest upon, they must now yield their claims to our confidence. They cannot stand the fiery test of a careful and exhaustive exegesis. And unless any proposed modification of church usage for union's sake can be predicated upon some other view of the relation of the church local to the church general, existing usages may, for aught we know, plead good authority to continue till the end of time, or at least of the present dispensation. They may be among the essentials of church-hood, whose preservation is indispensable to the coming of Christ's kingdom in its fullness and glory.

This much is clear,—that the church, whatever it is, is an institution of a character peculiarly its own, and is quite as essential to the kingdom as the kingdom is to it. It is no dim and unimportant reflection of the kingdom, but, possessing the best elements of the kingdom, is, under God, the organized power by which it is to be extended to the ends of the earth. Its work is, therefore, very dependent upon its nature or structure, whence it becomes of imperative importance that, having eliminated the kingdom question from our problem, we now proceed to inquire at the Word for the true idea of the church.

CHAPTER III.

THE TRUE IDEA OF THE CHURCH.

HAVING now duly prepared ourselves, we come to the positive side of our subject and inquire: What is the New Testament idea of the church?

We have seen that three ideas especially are now seeking supremacy on scriptural grounds,—the Catholic or universal, the invisible or Protestant universal, and the local. Nearly all others are but modifications of these, having them as their base and involving no essentially different principles. Thus the visible church of the Westminister Confession is but a dim reflection of the invisible, differing from it mainly in being confined to the world instead of embracing also the elect of Heaven. True, it is said that "unto this Catholic visible church Christ hath given the ministry, oracles, and ordinances of God," as though it were an organized body competent to receive and use these gifts; but this is rather imaginary than real, for it has no organized existence, and can use them only through the "particular churches" into which it is conceived to be subdivided. In the confession, indeed, it is said to be "also Catholic or universal under the gospel." Any people who, holding to this confession, advocate its "particular churches" with their definite constitutions, as well as its "invisible" and "visible" without such definite constitutions, hold to

and advocate two theories of the church rather than one, and them an "irrepressible conflict" with each other. The one is not even a type or metaphor of the other.

Again, in drawing a distinction between the church and the kingdom, we have taken away the main support of both the universal and the invisible church ideas, their advocates always assuming, as their major premise, that the church and the kingdom are identical. Thus the Westminister Confession says "the visible church, which is also Catholic or universal, is the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ." It utters the universal sentiment of those who hold to these unorganized universal churches as scriptural ideas of the body of Christ. But if there is a radical distinction between the church and the kingdom, as we have endeavored to show, it is rendered exceedingly doubtful whether the term *church* should be applied in this general and loose manner at all.

Section I.—Our Proposition Stated.

Our question then narrows to this: Apart from references to the kingdom of Christ, does the New Testament authorize only the local idea of the church and such derived uses as are in harmony with it, or does it also authorize the universal and invisible, thus involving an irrepressible conflict within itself? Irrepressible conflict is none too strong a qualificative, for it must be apparent to every one that ideas so different from the local cannot dwell harmoniously with it in the same system. We know how the Catholic or

universal has warred against the local, staining centuries with the blood of the contest. And any one who will be at the pains to analyze the elements involved in the present strife about Christian union and communion, will be satisfied, we think, that, if not a bloody, a no less real strife is being waged between the invisible idea and the local. All who advocate moral or spiritual union as the unity or oneness into which Christ prayed that His people might be perfected, and the open communion theory on the assumption that the church, like the kingdom, is "the communion of saints, the household of faith," are advocating the invisible or Protestant universal idea of the church; while all those who contend that moral or spiritual union is the lowest form of Christian union, a form which exists or prevails wherever there are persons possessed of the spirit of Christ, and that from this Christ prayed that his people might proceed to something higher and more comprehensive, something which might with some propriety be called oneness, and who also plead that the Lord's Supper is a church ordinance to which baptism is an indispensable prerequisite, advocate the local idea of the church. The church ideas underlying their special advocacies are the Redan towers of both parties, and their conflict never will cease until one or the other is captured or demolished. Not believing, then, that the inspired word authorizes or fosters intentionally such a conflict as either of these, and yet seeing no possible release from it until one definite idea of the church rules the field, we are about to assume that the word teaches only or

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exclusively the local idea with its logical derivatives, and gives no support whatever to ideas so foreign to it as either the universal or the invisible.

By the local idea, we mean, as is perhaps already apparent, that the true and actual church is a local and individual society with a definite constitution, such as we are yet to describe. By its logical derivatives, we mean such uses of the term *church* as are not only common and natural, but are also harmonious with this as the original. Thus, it is both natural and logical for us to speak, as we often do, of the church as an institution existing, not separately from local churches, but in them, as man, the kind of animal, exists in men as animals. This is called a *generic* use of the term. Again we may conceive of all such local societies as combined or collected into one whole, of the same model with each, and apply the term *church* to the collection, as the Baptist or Congregational churches of America are often conceived and called the Baptist or Congregational Church of America. This is a *collective* use of the term, justified by current usage, although representing only an ideal body. These generic and collective uses of the term, then, we call logical derivatives from the local. But such a use of the collective as should combine, in the ideal body, persons not belonging to any of the local churches would be illogical and unjustifiable. Hence, we could not admit of such a classification as *local* and *universal* or *invisible*, unless it were distinctly shown that the New Testament uses terms thus illogically. The one is no proper collective of the other, since it collects materials wholly

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and extensively foreign to it. We can hardly refrain from an expression of surprise that so able a reasoner as Dr. Dagg, in his "Church Order," should confound collective with universal as he does in his reasoning with Mr. Courtney, a fictitious character in "Theodosia Earnest." Grant that Mr. Courtney is wrong in the use of the generic for the collective, and still it does not make the true collective Dr. Dagg's universal. Our proposition then is, that the *local*, *generic* and *collective* uses of the term *church* are its only uses in the New Testament where it means the Lord's ecclesia.

Section II.—Ecclesia Defined and Applied.

The term *ecclesia*, as we have already indicated, literally means *the called out*, but with especial reference to authority in both the callers and the called. Hence, Liddell and Scott define it as "an assembly of the citizens, (qualified voters,) summoned by the criers, the legislative assembly." Donegan: "an assembly of the people convoked by the heralds; also the place of assembly." But "the people" so convoked were the citizens possessed of the elective franchise, and no others. Dean Trench says: "*Ecclesia*, as all know, was the lawful assembly in a free Greek city of all those possessed of the rights of citizenship, for the transaction of public affairs." The term had substantially the same use in the Spartan and Athenian democracies which it had in the free cities, the latter having derived their principles of government from the former. This is doubtless the primary use of the term as applied to the Lord's institution.

But as words are generally used with more or less latitude of meaning, it would be perfectly natural that this one should be applied to assemblies corresponding to those named only in a general way. It has acquired such a use in the English language; hence we speak of an almost endless variety of churches, the Israelitish church, the church before the flood, the church of the present day, meaning christendom, the church of this country or that, the church as this denomination or that, in short anything that can be conceived as a religious body. The term had also a use somewhat similarly extended in the Apostles' day. Hence in Acts XIX: 32, 41, we find it applied to the mob which had convened in the theatre at Ephesus, under the riotous call of Demetrius and others, whose business had suffered from the preaching of Paul. But, here the distinction between the latitudinarian and strict sense of the term is preserved by a reference in verse 39, to "the lawful assembly" or ecclesia. We have also an extended or metaphorical use of the term in the Septuagint version of the Old Testament, where it variously covers the Lord's Israel called out of Egypt (*Deut.* XXXI: 30), and especially their religious gatherings (*Ps.* XL: 9, see note in *An. Par. Bib.*); their business assemblies (2 *Chr.* XXX: 23), the business assemblies of their leaders (1 *Chr.* XXIX: 1; 2 *Chr.* XXIII: 3), companies of prophets (1 *Sam'l* XIX: 20), and even assemblies of angels (*Psalm* LXXXIX: 5), or of "evil doers" (*Psalm* XXVI: 5.) This Septuagint use we have twice quoted in the New Testament (*Acts* VII: 38, and *Heb.* II: 12). But this extended metaphorical use of the term argues

nothing against the primary and restricted use of it. Hence, of course, it decides nothing with respect to the Lord's ecclesia, any more than the wide use of *baptize* in the English decides the baptismal controversy. Indeed, were the wide use to decide, it would compel us to make our Lord's ecclesia so broad as to cover evil doers as well as good, and that by intention, since it is so applied in two of the instances cited. The very question we have to answer respects the restriction of its meaning. What is the New Testament use of it as applied to the Lord's institution? If it do not cover every kind of an assembly, good or bad, orderly or riotous, which may choose to call itself a church, does it cover what in no proper sense of the term is an assembly, (a convocation never occurring), simply because the people or spirits concerned are good or are numbered, as we may hope, among the "first-born?" In other words, does it cover the invisible church or its dim reflection, the visible church of the Westminister and other confessions, which "consists of all those throughout the world, together with" (though generally without) "their children; and is the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ, the house and family of God?" Or is it restricted to such as are called out of the world and are actually separated and organized into local bodies for doing the Lord's work,—to these and their logical derivatives the generic and true collective? Our answer is to be obtained by an appeal to the actual uses of the term in the New Testament. If even one well attested case can be found where it is applied to our Lord's institution in any of these broader senses, our

proposition is not sustained. But if not a single case can be adduced where a just interpretation necessitates a broader and larger view, our proposition is overwhelmingly established.

Section III.—Uses of Term Classified and Examined.

Passing, then, the five uses of the term just alluded to where our Lord's institution is not under consideration, (*Acts* xix: 32, 39, 40; 7: 38; *Heb.* ii; 12), we have a hundred and ten (110) cases which will require a careful examination. But the examination will not be as tedious as one might suppose, since we are able to classify them under a few heads.

Ninety-two Local Uses.

The very large number of *ninety-two* (92) are so manifestly in the *local sense*, there can be no controversy about them. Thirty-six (36) of them are in the plural, which tolerates nothing but the local idea, neither the universal nor invisible admitting the plural, and the remaining fifty-six (56) are singular uses as explicit as the church in Jerusalem, the church in Ephesus, the church in Rome or the church in Corinth. But ninety-two (92) cases out of a hundred and ten (110) in which the church is a local body as well defined as the legislative assembly of a Grecian Free City or the Athenian Democracy, we deem to be an immensely strong argument in favor of our position. It renders it absolutely certain that the local idea commonly rules in the New Testament, and if there be no equally explicit

use in a conflicting sense, exceedingly probable, (if we ought not to say certain,) that it rules exclusively. Were we dealing with the term *School* instead of *Church*, ninety-two out of a hundred and ten uses of it in the sense of an organized local institution, would leave very little doubt as to whether that was its primary meaning, even though we were familiar with such expressions as schools of philosophy, science or religion, schools of adversity, schools of drunkenness and schools of war. Indeed scarcely any application of the term could persuade us that a real school was anything but such an institution.

But we hasten to the examination of the eighteen (18) remaining uses of the term *ecclesia*, they being the ones relied upon for the support of other theories.

Two Generic Uses.

Two of them we call decidedly *generic*. They are *Matt.* XVI: 18, and *Eph.* III: 10, the former of them being the first occurrence of the term in the New Testament, an allusion to an institution to be built, and hence very naturally generic. With the verse following, the text reads thus: "And I also say to thee that thou art Peter, πὲτρος, and upon this rock, πὲτρᾳ, I will build my church; and the gates of the underworld shall not prevail against it. And I will give thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

The expression *my church* does not mean any particular local church, and must therefore, designate either the church institution or the whole collection of churches. But that it does not designate the latter in the loose sense of the *universal* or *invisible church*, is manifest from its contrast with the expression *kingdom of heaven*, their synonym in popular usage; and that it does not designate it in the true or strict sense of collective, if not sufficiently evident from the same contrast, is put beyond question by the force of the qualificative *my*. *My church* is Christ's or the Christian church, in distinction from all other ecclesias. And this distinction is expressed in the same manner in which scientific terms distinguish one species of animals from another or from their common genus. Thus *felis leo* distinguishes the lion (*leo*) not merely from the genus (*felis*) to which he belongs, but also from the other species of feline animals, such as *felis tigris* (the tiger) and *felis catus* (the cat), and that all the same, whether they are or are not named. In like manner the expression *my church* designates the genus, *church* or *ecclesia*, and the particular species meant, *my*, *Christ's* or *Christian*. By inventing a few scientific names for the different species of ecclesia we have already noticed, we may make the distinctions clearer perhaps. They will stand thus: Genus, *ecclesia*; species, *ecclesia christiana*, *ecclesia publica*, *ecclesia urbica*, or the *Christian* (*my*) *ecclesia*, the *State ecclesia*, such as the Athenian Democracy, and the *Free City ecclesia*. In each of these designations *ecclesia* is the name of the genus, and the qualifying word the index

to the species. If then, *my church* means Christ's or the Christian church institution as distinguished from other ecclesias, as evidently it does, *church* is used generically. Nor shall we admit Dr. Dagg's objection to this use to be well taken when he says, that what is affirmed generically is affirmed of every church composing the genus, and hence, if any local church is prevailed against, as many have been, the fact proves the use of the term in this passage not generic, (*Church Order* p. 104). He himself admits exceptions to his rule, which are enough to nullify the force of this application, and, whatever may seem to follow upon a train of reasoning, the verdict of popular usage is, that what is true of the genus is only generally true of the species or individuals falling under it, whence the derivative *generally* from *genus*. Thus the failure of the objection confirms the conclusion that the use is generic.

The other passage is as follows: "That now, to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places might be made known through the church the manifold wisdom of God."

This is so manifestly a *generic* use of the term that we need spend no time upon it. No one would claim that a single local church could monopolize such glorious work as is referred to, nor could he any more consistently claim that an imaginary collection of churches or the equally intangible kingdom of heaven could effect such results. Reference is clearly had to the Christly elements in men as organized and operative in the church institution, maintaining and

representing "the unity of the spirit" in its seven incomparable points of doctrine and life, building up the individual members as well as the organized body itself into "the unity of the faith" with whatever additional to "the unity of the spirit" it may involve, and stretching out by its evangelizing efforts in invincible power and unequaled glory through the world.

Two Collective Uses.

Two of the passages remaining we classify as quite clearly *collective*. *Heb.* XII: 23 and *Eph.* III: 21.

"The general assembly and church of the first born who are enrolled in heaven."

We have already spoken of the contrast presented by these terms, *general assembly* (πανήγυρισ) being a festive term which, in the Greek use, represented the mixed and unorganized multitudes who, in holiday mood, gathered at their national games, and *church* (ἐκκλησία,) the name of the assembly of citizens or qualified voters who legislated upon affairs of state, (p. 60). This very contrast, while it forbids making the church coextensive with the kingdom, suggests that as the general assembly is conceived, not institutionally but collectively, and with reference to personal mood and occupation, so also is the church. Moreover, the phrase "*who are enrolled*," applicable alike to both terms, carries us away from the idea of an institution to its members, while the general sweep of thought is evidently unlimited by any one local church. We refer the term, therefore, to the collective idea, and understand the writer to mean that be-

lievers in Christ have come to the hosts of those who, having His divine life, are organized into churches for the purpose of building themselves up in the faith and of publishing His power to save.

"To Him be the glory in the church, in Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, world without end. Amen."

The manner in which glory accrues to God in the church forever has already been explained as, not in the working processes of the church continued, but in their beatific results enjoyed, (p. 70). Church here, then, is not the institution, for that ceases when its work ends. Nor is it any particular local church, for the statement is as applicable to all local churches as to one. Much less is it the kingdom of Christ, in the sense of either the universal or the invisible church, for the expression has not previously occurred in this epistle, and in fact occurs in it subsequently but once, and then in contrast with church, as an inheritance contrasts with the working forces which care for it. (Chap. v: 5 cf. iii: 10). Besides, to assume that it is the kingdom in either of these senses would be a pitiable begging of the whole question, even if there were no such contrast. The only logical conclusion, therefore, is that the use is the true collective, and the glory is the result of church culture of kingdom material.

Ten Cases,—Local and Collective.

Ten cases we may now class as partly *local* and partly *collective*. They are cases in which either directly or indirectly the church is called *the body of*

Christ, viz: 1 *Cor.* XII: 27, 28; *Eph.* I: 22, 23; *Col.* I: 18, 24, and *Eph.* V: 23, 24, 25, 27, 29, 32. In the following passages, though the church is not named, reference is had to the figure of the body, and therefore they may aid in the interpretation of the others: *Matt.* XXVI: 26; 1 *Cor.* VI: 15–17; X: 16, 17; XII: 12–26; *Rom.* XII: 45; *Eph.* II: 16; IV: 4, 12, 16; *Col.* III: 15. Of the cases we are especially to consider, the first four are the chief, and read as follows:

"Now ye are the body of Christ, and members each one. And God set some in the church, first apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governings, diversities of tongues.—And subjected all things under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.—And he is the head of the body, the church.—Now I rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body, which is the church."

An examination of these and the correlated passages reveals the following facts:

1. That a local church is called the body of Christ. "Now *ye* (the Corinthian church) are the body of Christ." "Now I rejoice in my sufferings for *you* (members of the Collossian church), and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh, for his body, which is the church" (of which you are members). "And let the peace of God rule in your hearts (members of the Collossian church) to which we were also called in one body."

2. That local churches are called bodies discriminately, thus emphasizing each as a distinct body.

This is true in the passages just quoted, at least in the first and third. If the Collossian church was one body, by implication the Ephesian or any other church was another. But the passage concerning the Corinthian church is very explicit, the original having no definite article before church. Hence the meaning is, not ye are *the* body of Christ exclusively as Romanists assert that theirs is *the* church, admitting no other, but ye are *one* body of Christ, or such as the body of Christ; that is, the term *body* is applicable to them as it is to others. Paul was no Romanist in this sense, nor was he an invisible church theorist in any similar exclusive sense, nowhere calling any church *the* body by such a use of the definite article. In chapter III: 9, 16 he calls the same Corinthian church, according to the Bible Union version, "God's field," "God's building," "God's temple," but literally *field of God*, *building of God*, *temple of God*, the article being found in neither case. Evidently he does not mean to say that the Corinthian church is exclusively God's field, building or temple, but simply that they were *a* temple such as they were in danger of defiling by their wicked wrangling; *a* building upon whose apostle-laid foundation they were in danger of placing "wood, hay and stubble," when they should use "gold, silver and precious stones." Prof. Kendrick explains the force of the article in these cases thus: "*We* say, 'Ye are the temple of God,' if we mean that ye have such a character as may be indicated by the phrase 'temple

of God.' The Greeks would say ὁ ναὸς θεοῦ (*the* temple of God) *only*, if they meant not merely *a* temple, but the one particular temple." In explanation of the reason why the English version should use the definite article in the passage we are considering, he adds: "It is simply a matter of English idiom to say 'the body,' 'the temple,' in the passages indicated, while it is equally a matter of Greek idiom to omit it; because the Apostle does not mean 'there is one temple of God and ye are the one temple (then ὁ ναὸς τοῦ θεοῦ), but simply the term temple is applicable; hence '*a* temple,' or rather 'temple' in Greek, but 'the temple' in our English idiom. So with σῶμα χριστοῦ (body of Christ"). (Private letter, March 4, 1873).

Harmonious with this free and metaphorical use of terms, the body of the individual saint, in chap. VI: 19, is called the "temple of the Holy Spirit," while in *Rev.* XXI: 22 "the Lord God Almighty" "and the Lamb" are "the temple" of the New Jerusalem. Moreover, any one of ten thousand loaves which may be broken in commemoration of Christ's sufferings and death is his "body," or a visible representation of himself, (1 *Cor.* X: 16, *Matt.* XXVI: 26). Add now to these considerations that while in the two epistles to the Corinthians the term *church* occurs twenty-eight (28) times,—sixteen in the singular number and twelve in the plural,—there is but one single well attested use of it in any but the local sense; add, also, that while in *Ephesians* II: 21 the sum total of citizen-saints are called "a holy temple in the Lord," in the very next verse the Ephesian church is called "a habita-

tion of God in the Spirit," and we think all must concede that there is no church which is exclusively "the body of Christ," but that the Corinthian or any other local church, "if fitly framed together," may properly be called such.

The passages under consideration reveal:

3. That the term *church*, with as without the figure of the body, is used in the *generic sense*. Such a use we think is found in the passages of *Eph.* v: 23–32, which are as follows:

"Because a husband is the head of the wife, as also Christ is the head of the church; himself the Saviour of the body. But as the church is subjected to Christ, so also are the wives to their own husbands in everything."

"Husbands, love your wives, as also Christ loved the church, and gave himself up for it; that he might sanctify it, having cleansed it with the bathing of water in the word, that he might himself present to himself the church, glorious, having no spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it may be holy and blameless. So husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh; but nourishes and cherishes it, as also Christ the church; because we are members of his body (being), of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall be joined to his wife, and the two shall be one flesh."

"This mystery is great; but I am speaking of Christ and of the church."

What is said in these verses is as applicable to one church as another, just as what is said of the marriage relation is equally applicable to all husbands and wives, or just as what is said of man would be applicable to all men in a sentence which should read: "Christ loved man and gave himself up for him." And this is the generic use.

4. That the *collective* use of the term under the figure of the body may be admitted, but is not clearly expressed.

We might possibly substitute the collective for the generic in the passages just quoted, although the generic appears to be the more natural. We might also admit the idea in Eph. IV: 12, where the term *body* is evidently used as a synonym with church, reference being had to the work of the church ministry (cf. 1 *Cor.* XII: 28) as intended "for the building up of the body of Christ, till we have attained to the unity of the faith, *et cetera.*" The words "we all," especially, suggest, though they do not compel this use. There may be other cases of a similar character, but

5. These passages reveal no use of the figure of the body which makes the term *church* to cover any but actual members of some local society.

The church is repeatedly said to be the body of Christ, and no collection of men but a church is said to be a body. To infer then that any but church members are included under that figure, would be entirely unwarrantable, and especially so since we have seen the very marked distinction between the church and the kingdom, and the dimness of allusion to even the collective

of church under that figure. Had the Holy Spirit desired to say that the kingdom is the body, it would have been just as easy as to say the church or a church is. But He never makes that affirmation, and whoever draws the inference exceeds his warrant as furnished in the data given. So far from warranting the application of the term *church* as in the universal or invisible church theory, the figure of the body directs our attention to organizations which may be rent by "schisms," (1 *Cor.* XII: 25), and which has literal "members" to care personally and officially for each other.

Should any one refer us to Eph. II: 13, and context, where Jews and Gentiles are presented as reconciled "to God in one body by the cross" or its "blood," (v. 13), both thus having access in one Spirit to the Father, (18), we would refer him in turn to chapter I: 22, 23, where "the church" is previously and expressly said to be the "body," and suggest that this after statement must be interpreted harmoniously with that. The idea of the church, in other words, rules that of the body, and not *vice versa*. The one Spirit or the blood may be the all essential power by which the one body is produced, but other things may be needful to its completion. Baptism is not here named, but in 1 Cor. XII: 13, we learn that under the Spirit's leadership all are "baptized into the one body, whether Jews or Greeks," and, in Eph. IV: 4, 6, we learn that "the unity of the Spirit" which the one body represents has seven items instead of one. Moreover, in the verses immediately following the ones to which we are cited, the figure of the body gives place to that of a building,

under which we have the Ephesian church as "a habitation," while the reconciled Jews and Gentiles *en masse* are "the building fitly framed together," whence the inference certainly is that the two edifices correspond in spiritual architecture. The church "habitation" is the model under which we are to conceive of the great metaphorical building or body. And if the Apostle's view of the church be not presented with sufficient clearness in this epistle, he must be studied in his other writings which certainly are not ambiguous.

But some keen eyed critic may possibly think he finds an argument against our limitation of the members of the body to those of the local church or churches, in the use of the pronouns *we* and *ye* as applied indiscriminately to the Roman, Corinthian and Ephesian bodies, (*Rom.* XII: 3, 4; 1 *Cor.* XII: 13, 27; *Eph.* IV: 1, 13, 17). If so, our answer is, that *we* necessarily includes no one but the Apostle writing, in addition to those addressed, and that inspired Apostles, upon whom churches are built as parts of their foundations, do certainly belong to such structures as really, if not as vitally, as Christ himself, the chief corner stone, (1 *Cor.* XII: 28).

Such then are the facts relative to the church under the figure of the body. They invariably emphasize the local idea and warrant no departure from it, save in the direction of the generic or true collective, which really are no departures. *Body*, like its cognate term *embodiment*, looks not toward the inward, unorganized and spiritual, so much as toward their enshrinement in the outward, organized and tangible.

But does not this view convert "the union between Christ and his people into a monster having one head and many bodies?" (*Dagg. Ch. Ord.* 111). Or, since the body of Christ is "the fullness of Him who filleth all in all," does not the idea of bodies imply "fullnesses," and therefore a great inconsistency? (*Ibid* 113). We are glad to answer such objections specifically, for their answer reveals a marked glory of the inspired view if we have obtained it. The fullness of God is predicable alike of Christ, of individual christians, and of the church. "*In Him* (Christ) dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily," (*Col.* II: 9). "Till *we all* attain to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ," (*Eph.* IV: 13 cf. III: 19). "*The church* which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all," (*Eph.* I: 23). The fullness of God, then, is not limited to the entire host of the redeemed or to any considerable portion of them, but may be attained by each disciple, just as any number of artists may attain to the fullness of musical or oratorical skill, or any number of members of Christ's kingdom may have the fullness of its "righteousness, joy and peace." *Fullnesses* in this sense, is precisely the glorious thought of the Holy Spirit, while a single fullness which must be parcelled out to all the members of the kingdom is a very meagre and material view. The other objection we answer in a similar way. Each church, like each loaf, a body, and the collective of all churches no more than a body, is analagous to each man a temple of the Holy Spirit or a church a temple, and to Christ in each man "the hope of glory," or

Christ holding "the seven stars" in his right hand the hope of the church's glory. "One body," in the sense of the Catholic or Universal church theory, utterly ignores the plural in churches, bodies and fullnesses. It is decidedly materialistic. "One body," in the sense of the invisible church theory, utterly ignores the substantial and organic in the figure as well as these plurals. It is decidedly vapory, uses a figure where nothing is figured. Any church of Christ duly composed and organized has the fullness of Christ essential to the one body, the same as a drop of water has the complete sphericity essential to the 360 degrees, while all the churches collected into one mental conception contain no more than the same fullness, just as all the drops of water consolidated into an immense aqueous globe would contain no more than the 360 degrees. "If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light," contains a similar thought, and is applicable to one man, any number of men, to one society of men or to any number of such societies. The light is one and in some sense indivisible, and yet as any number of planets may be the fullness of sunlight so may any number of men or churches be the fullness of spiritual light. A single fullness parcelled out so as to make the individual man, planet or society, only a fraction of fullness, is immensely below the divine conception.

Three Collective Uses.

The next three of the eighteen uses of the term we classify as *collective.* They are as follows:

1 Cor. XV: 9. "For I am the least of the apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God."

Gal. I: 13. "For ye heard of my conduct formerly in Judaism; that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God and was destroying it."

Phil. III: 6. "As to zeal, persecuting the church."

We confess to some difficulty in classifying these passages, for the reason that the author gives us so little by which to judge of his form of conception. The expressions themselves determine nothing, since they are equally adapted to any view of the church. All depends upon the form of thought in the Apostle's mind when penning them, for which we must rely wholly upon their contexts. As a matter of fact, he persecuted a local church, as we are distinctly told,—"the church that was at Jerusalem," (*Acts* VIII: 1, 3). But in alluding to this fact many years afterward, when churches were numerous, he may have conceived his work of ruin as directed against either that local church, the church institution or the church collective. In the cases of the first and third passages, the context throws not a ray of light upon his form of thought, unless it be in the accompanying uses of the term *church*, which are invariably in the local sense. In neither of the epistles to the Corinthians, nor in those to the Gallatians and Phillipians are there so many as one use of the term in any but the local sense, unless these passages contain it. And yet we feel as though it was a little unnatural for the writer to speak of "the church" in such a connection without adding the

words "*at Jerusalem*," if he meant that local church exclusively.

In classifying these uses as *collective*, we are governed mainly by the force of the term *persecute* and the context of the passage from Galatians. The term *persecute* is hardly the term to use with respect to an institution, we think, it looking rather to persons than things, and hence we are reluctant to adopt the *generic* use. Then in verses 22 and 23 of the context in Galatians, the idea of persecution is extended to "the churches of Judea" which sprang into existence, doubtless, subsequent to the persecution, whence our inference is that his form of thought was the collective of church.

But here we are met with the common view that this collective is the church *universal*, in either the Romish or Protestant sense of the term. What proof that it is not? We reply that the burden of proof is not on us but on those who choose to introduce such a novel use of the term. For any one to assume that disciples out of the church as well as those in it are meant when the term *church* is used, is every whit as illogical as to assume that children who do not attend school as well as those who do are covered by the term *school*. But waiving all objections of this kind in the interest of simple truth, we will answer the question. Please bear in mind then, that in neither of the epistles from which our passages are taken does the term *church* occur so much as once in other than the local sense, save in these passages, occurring though it does, in the aggregate, twenty-seven times. This certainly is not hope-

ful for the universal idea. What further light we obtain we must derive mainly from the book of Acts, in which we have the narratives of Paul's persecution. And here we are met with inferences based upon such expressions as "Many of the saints did I myself shut up in prison," (XXVI: 10), "breathing threatening and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord," (IX: 1), and "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest." Since "saints" and "disciples" are sometimes named instead of "the church," and since Jesus is persecuted whenever any of his saints or disciples are persecuted, it is argued that "the church" includes all saints. If Saul could have persecuted but one class of disciples, to wit, church members, then we should most certainly have to concede that the church included all his victims, however difficult it might be to suppose that "the church which was at Jerusalem" included them all. But if he asked of the high priest "letters to Damascus to *the synagogue*, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem," then he may have persecuted both Jesus and saints elsewhere than in "the church." We must bear in mind that there were multitudes of professed Christians who, in that initiatory stage of church history, were unconnected with churches. Probably there was no church at Damascus, though there were disciples there, and hence, when converted, Saul "straightway preached Jesus in the synagogue" instead of a church assembly.

But the most forcible of all arguments for the universal sense of the church in the passages we are consid-

ering is based upon a revised rendering of Acts IX: 31, by which the plural of church is changed to the singular. We do not question the propriety of the change, based, as it claims to be, upon the reading of the best and some of the more recently discovered manuscripts. We should have added the passage to our eighteen had our attention been called to the change in it earlier. As revised, it reads:

"The *church* therefore, throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria had peace, being built up and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the consolation of the Holy Spirit, was multiplied."

Lange and his translator, Dr. Schaeffer of the Lutheran Theological Seminary, Philadelphia, both concur with Meyer, whom the translator quotes as making the passage thus revised "expressive of the apostolical conception of the unity of the church," by which is meant the whole body of Christians, or the "church universal." (*Lange's Com. Critical and Doctrinal Notes*).

But what are the facts? The word *therefore*, as the commentators justly observe, connects the broken thread of history with the first part of chapter eight, where we are told that the church at Jerusalem "were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria," and went "preaching the word." The church then which "had peace" and "was multiplied" when the persecution ceased, was the same scattered Jerusalem church, and not a great church universal which contains all christians,—I cannot say *embodies* them when it has no organized existence, and hence no

church body, but only a spirit. Subsequently to the time under review these scattered members of the Jerusalem church evidently organized themselves into churches, and hence Paul in his epistle to the Gallatians, written about the year 57, speaks of "the churches of Judea," (1: 22); but at the time, so far as we know, the Jerusalem church was the only church on the face of the earth. And a careful survey of Luke's use of the terms *Kingdom of Heaven* and *church* will show that he never makes them synonymous. In his gospel he never speaks of the church. In the Acts he rarely names the kingdom —only eight times in the whole book—while he uses the term church twenty-two times. And his manner of using it shows precision of meaning. He specifies distinctly the church in Jerusalem, the church in Antioch, the church at Cesarea, and other places uses the term repeatedly in the plural, but never uses it in other than the local sense unless it be in the passage we are considering. Moreover, in referring to the persecution by Saul and others associated with him, he carefully selects his terms, never saying *church* unless reference is had distinctly to the church at Jerusalem, but always saying *saints*, *disciples* or something that implies no church organization when allusion is had to other places. To assume, then, that in this one instance he is introducing a use of the term entirely foreign to his custom, as well as to the facts of the case, is to say the very least, a very high assumption—an assumption no minds so well informed and logical as those referred to would make, had they not been stoutly prepossessed with an overmastering idea. We wish no better evi-

dence than this verse and the common use of terms by which Luke and Paul refer to the persecution in support of our position on the local idea and its derivatives. The very discriminations upon which others rely for support of the universal idea are evidently made in deference to the local.

There remains but one of the eighteen passages for us to consider. (1 *Tim.* III: 15.) "That thou mayest know how thou oughtest to conduct thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth."

Church here certainly is not used in the collective sense, either the true or the loose, for only an actual church can be a pillar and ground of the truth, sustaining it as the pillars of some ancient temple sustained its massive frieze and cornice. Moreover, the expression, *house of God* which is used synonymously with *church*, evidently glances backward and stands in contrast with the expression *His own house* of verse five. That verse reads: "If one knows not how to preside over his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God." The overseer or teacher stands related to the church or house of God, as respects his leading or governing ability, as a father stands related to his own house or family; but in such a sense no one can be related as an overseer to the church collective in any meaning of that term, since the relation respects a real organism and not a metaphorical or imaginary structure.

The term then is here used in either the local or the generic sense. But it is evident that the Ephesian

church is not exclusively meant, for in the original the definite article is wanting before both *house* and *church*. It is also wanting before *church* in verse five. The meaning, therefore, is any church, or the church as an organized society, a house with a ruling or teaching head wherever found. But this is the generic sense or use of the term. Hence the use of the term in this passage is the *generic*.

No Universal Church.

Thus we have surveyed every use of the term in the New Testament and find not one having reference to our Lord's ecclesia, which does not fall under the local idea or one of its logical derivatives, which are simply the local idea in another form. The collective use is the only one which could be extended so as to cover the universal church in either the Romish or Protestant sense; but we find not one such use which is not limited to church members, or to the true collective sense. Not a single case can be adduced where the loose and extended use of the collective can be adopted without a forced and unnatural interpretation. The New Testament is utterly innocent of the inward conflict of those theories which adopt both the invisible, or universal as it is now more commonly called, and the local ideas. It is everywhere self-consistent. We consider our proposition, therefore, as overwhelmingly affirmed by the word of the Lord. But we have not by any means exhausted evidence, and, though it is not really necessary to do so, we desire to offer a little additional.

Section IV.—Ephesians Epitomized.

The church of Ephesus is a model for students of church architecture. Naturally enough, therefore, the epistle to that church is the great treatise on ecclesiology, a correct interpretation of which is of the utmost importance. But like other of Paul's writings, it contains "some things hard to understand," which one who is not careful may "wrest" to the detriment of the church itself as well as to his theory of it. The epistle needs the most critical study as well as the most careful scanning, and that in connection with its author's use of terms elsewhere. Thus examined it will throw very important light upon our subject. An epitome, we think, will stand as follows:

1. Its *grand theme* is "the dispensation of the fullness of times," (I: 10), whose chief aim is the gathering "into one all things in Christ, the things which are in the heavens, and the things on the earth."

2. The *inward spiritual forces* by which, so far as the earthly and fallen are concerned, this unity in Christ is effected, are, on the divine side, "the Holy Spirit of promise" by which men have access to God and an earnest of the future inheritance, (I: 13, 14; II: 18), and, on the human, that faith which is by grace and receives the word of truth, (II: 8; I: 13).

3. The *chosen embodiment and authorized representative* of the unity in the world, is "the church which is Christ's body, the fullness of him who fills all" which enters into the unity, (I: 22, 23). In the church, therefore, are we to look for our Lord's workmanship in the

line of Christian union. Membership in it, if duly effected, is *prima facia* evidence that one really belongs to the household of faith and is a fellow-citizen with the saints, (II: 19, 20), and is also the appointed means of growing to "a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, (IV: 13). The church, in a word, is the Lord's earthly repository of results, and hence a natural reflector of His glory to the remotest ages of the future, (III: 21).

4. The church is, moreover, the *appointed agency* by which the dispensation is worked, and its mysteries of grace, hidden from the foundation of the world, unfolded, (III: 10). Its constitutional doctrines are the doctrines of the kingdom or dispensation, (IV: 1–6); its members are the members of Christ's body, being of His flesh and bones, (5: 30), and hence naturally inclined as well as solemnly enjoined to illustrate in their lives the virtues which are characteristic of the kingdom, (V: 3–5), thus giving the world actual specimens of the unity realized; and it is duly officered with men whose sole business it is to promulgate the gospel and expound the doctrines of the dispensation for the evangelization of the ungodly and the perfecting of saints, (IV: 11, 16). Thus it is, at the same time, the school of the disciple and the propagator of the faith, (cf. *Rom.* X: 14).

5. Being so vitally important, therefore, to the individual disciple as well as to the world and Christ's cherished unity, and especially because it has Christ for its head, itself being a sort of second incarnation by which He is now made visible to the world, it is *to*

be cherished as a man cherishes his wife, for whom he has left father and mother, and whom he regards as of one flesh with himself, (v: 31, 32).

6. But all this is compatible only with a church which, having been "fitly framed together," is clearly defined and organically visible,—a local church, or one of its logical derivations. It is not possible for the invisible church either to work the dispensation or represent its unity. Nor is it any more possible for its dim reflection, called the visible church, or their synonym called the universal. Neither of them has an organized existence, and, therefore, neither of them, as a real body, can do or represent anything. The great practical objection to representing either of them as the church of Christ, is that our Lord's grand purpose in the dispensation will fail when its appointed and organized working force is frittered away to moonshine. The Roman Catholic or universal church, as a working body, could put in a better plea than either of them, for it is most thoroughly organized and active, however poorly, in other respects, it may correspond to a *bona fide* Christian church. It were every whit as irrational to call the unorganized and undisciplined masses of the people an army, and talk of their subjugating provinces or kingdoms, as it is to talk of either of these misty, nondescript masses working the dispensation of the fullness of times, and making principalities and powers in heavenly places gaze with astonishment and admiration upon the unfolding of the mystery of ages. We do not underrate spirituality, but we simply say that, if it work the dispensation, it

must be embodied, and, if it work as a church, it must be embodied in a church organization.

With this view, and with this only, we believe every one of the nine (9) uses of the term church in this epistle will harmonize. And with this view, moreover, harmonizes the contrast with church, which the single use of the term *kingdom* presents, the immoralities which are incompatible with an inheritance in the kingdom of heaven, being for the reason of incompatibility intolerable in the church. (v: 3, 5, and context, cf., also 1 *Cor.* v: 9, 11).

Section V.—Testimony of Early Church History.

If now we turn our eye to the period of church history immediately following the apostolic, notwithstanding its "abstract indefiniteness," in which "no exact definitions concerning the nature of the church are found," we think we can find some testimony favorable to an interpretation of the apostolic or New Testament view. Though the writers of the period did not define the term *church*, they used it, and that in a manner indicating, as we think, that they had derived from the apostles the same ideas we are advocating, though modified in the latter part of the period by the growing idea of the one Catholic or universal church.

Clement, claimed by some to have been the immediate successor of Peter in the pastorate at Rome, in writing to the distracted church of Corinth on the behalf of the church of Rome, addresses it as follows: "The church of God which sojourns at Rome, to the church of God sojourning at Corinth;" of their trou-

ble he speaks thus: "It is disgraceful, beloved, yea, highly disgraceful, and unworthy of your Christian profession, that such a thing should be heard of as that the most steadfast and ancient church of the Corinthians should, on account of one or two persons, engage in sedition against its presbyters." Again, having spoken of the care which the apostles had taken to have good bishops (presbyters) and deacons succeed them in the churches which they planted, he says: "We are of the opinion, therefore, that those appointed by them, or afterwards by other eminent men, with the consent of the whole church, and who have blamelessly served the flock of Christ in an humble, peaceable and disinterested spirit, and have for a long time possessed the good opinion of all, cannot be justly dismissed from the ministry." Now, these forms of statement are sufficient to show that the church from which, as also that to which, Clement wrote were independent local bodies governing themselves, and not any indefinite fractional part of some great body which bore that name. He also uses the term *body* as well as the term *flock*, quoted above as a figurative representation of the local church, just as we have shown it to be used in the Scripture, saying to the Corinthian church: "Let our whole body then, be preserved in Christ Jesus." (*Apostolic Fathers, Clarke's Ed., pp.* 7, 41, 39, 34).

Eusebius in reference to this epistle says: "There is one acknowledged epistle of this Clement, great and admirable, which he wrote in the name of the church of Rome to the church of Corinth, sedition then having

arisen in the latter church. We are aware that this epistle has been publicly read in *very many churches*, both in old times and also in our day," (latter part of 4th century). Eusebius then must have been aware that the local idea of the church, which alone is compatible with "very many churches," had precedence of the universal.

With these forms of expression by Clement and Eusebius correspond those of Hermas the Shepherd. Of the church of Rome, of which he appears to have been a member, he speaks thus, figuring it as a woman: "He who brought me up, sold me to one Rhode in Rome. Many years after this I recognized her, and I began to love her as a sister, etc," (*Apostolic Fathers*, p. 323). Subsequently he is directed to write two books and send one to Clement and the other to Grapte, the one to be sent to foreign countries and the other to be used for the benefit of the widows and orphans of which Grapte had charge. "But you," it is added, "will read the words in this city (Rome) along with the presbyters who preside over the church," (331). In these citations there can be no question that a local church is meant. But when in the same paragraph from which our second quotation is taken, the church appears to him as an old woman, and, in answer to the question, "Why, then, is she an old woman?" the reply is given, "Because she was created first of all. On this account is she old. And for her sake was the world made," there can be no more question that the term is used in the generic sense, (331). And when, still later in the treatise, the church is represented as a tower built upon

the waters as illustrative of our life saved by water, (335), its lower tier of square white stones representing "apostles, bishops, teachers and deacons, who have lived in godly purity, and have acted as bishops and teachers and deacons chastely and reverently to the elect of God," (336), and upon them being laid different varieties of similar stones, the whole making as if a single monolith, so perfect is the work; or when again it is figured as a tower built upon a rock, into which a gate opens, and which is large enough to contain the whole world, both rock and gate representing Christ, while into the tower from numerous sources enter materials which are carefully inspected and some even rejected after they have been laid in the wall, the the whole again, in its consummation at the end of this dispensation, growing into the same seamless and polished monolith as before,—when, we say, the church is thus figured, it evidently approximates to our collective idea. We say approximates, for the treatise is very indefinite, save as to the character of the materials which enter into the structure, the ruling idea for which we are seeking being no part of the author's pursuit. But the varied uses we have quoted show conclusively that neither the universal nor the invisible idea had yet come to sway the Christian mind. So far as it expressed itself, its ideas corresponded most nearly to those we have advocated.

Even Ignatius, the great light of Episcopacy, casts his views in our mould of thought. His epistle to the Romans is addressed to "the church which presides in the place of the region of the Romans," a local body.

He also desires them to remember in prayer "the church which is in Syria, which, instead of me, has now for its shepherd the Lord, who says, I am the Good Shepherd"—another local church, that of Antioch. Still further he says, "My spirit salutes you, and the love of the *churches* which have received me in the name of Jesus Christ, and not as a mere passer by. For even those *churches* which were near to me in the way, have brought me forward, city by city." He knew then, not a universal church, whether visible or invisible, but churches local and multiplied.

Ireneus, also, we quote as a witness who so materially advanced the idea of the one Catholic or universal church. He presents both the local and collective idea, as follows: "As I have already observed, *the church*, having received this preaching and this faith, although scattered throughout the whole world, yet as if occupying but one house, carefully preserves it. She also believes these points (of doctrine) just as if she had but one soul, and one and the same heart, and she proclaims them and teaches them and hands them down with perfect harmony as if she possessed only one mouth. For the *churches* which have been planted in Germany do not believe, or hand down anything different; nor do those in Spain, nor those in Gaul, nor those in the East, nor those in Egypt, nor those in Lybia, nor those which have been established in the central regions of the world. Nor will any one of the rulers in the *churches*, however highly gifted he may be in point of eloquence, teach doctrines different from these." Again: "It is within the power of all, there-

fore, in *every church*, who may wish to see the truth, to contemplate clearly the tradition of the apostles manifested throughout the whole world; and we are in a position to reckon up those who were by the apostles instituted bishops in *the churches*, and to [demonstrate] the succession to our own times." Since, however, this would be tedious, he contents himself with giving the succession in "the very great, the very ancient and universally known church, founded and organized at Rome, by the two most glorious apostles, Peter and Paul," *et cetera*. "For it is a matter of necessity that *every church* should agree with *this church* on account of its preëminent authority." (*Writings, vol.* 1, *pp.* 43, 261). So far as the idea of the church is concerned, he could not have spoken in more absolute conflict with the present assumptions of the church of Rome, or in more absolute accord with the ideas we have deduced from the Scriptures. The church of Rome, notwithstanding its wonderful record and "preëminennt authority," is but a church among churches. "The church scattered throughout the world," is not the universal church of modern times, but a church which existed only in churches planted in Germany, Spain and elsewhere—our true collective.

Origen must have entertained the same view when he wrote: "As the teaching of the church, transmitted in orderly succession from the apostles, and remaining in the churches to the present day, is still preserved, that alone is to be accepted as truth which differs in no respect from ecclesiastical and apostolical tradition."

(*Writings I.*, 2). See also his views as presented on page 161.

Victorinus, bishop of Petau, must have also been possessed of the same conception when, in commenting upon Rev. 1: 16, he wrote: "Those seven stars are the seven churches, which he names in his addresses by name, and calls them to whom he wrote epistles. Not that they are themselves the only, or even the principal churches; but what he says to one he says to all. For they are in no respect different, that on that ground any one should prefer them to the larger number of similar small ones. In the whole world Paul taught that all the churches are arranged by sevens, that they are called seven, and that the Catholic church is one." "Therefore in these seven churches, of one Catholic church are believers, because it is one in seven by the quality of faith and election." (*Writings of Tertullian III.*, 398, 399).

A fragment ascribed by some to Caius, a presbyter of Rome in the time of Zephyrinus, (A. D. 201–218), and whom Eusebius calls "most learned," presents the same view when he says: "The blessed Apostle Paul, following the rule of his predecessor John, writes to no more than seven churches by name," and then adds: "Moreover, though he writes twice to the Corinthians and Thessalonians for their correction, it is yet shown, (*i. e.* by this sevenfold writing), that there is one church spread abroad through the world." (*Hippolytus II.* 161).

Fundamentally considered, indeed, the universal church of Romanists into which the ideas of the early

Christians consolidated, is a witness for rather than against the view we have advocated, since, if its central government, and a few other post-apostolic additions were removed, it would then become simply one church in many, *i. e.* a collective and local.

While, then, we concede that theories were wanting, or at least were not discussed in the period immediately succeeding the apostolic, we claim that floating expressions show the current of thought to have run in the direction of the local idea and its logical derivatives, and hence makes it strongly presumptive that our interpretation of Scripture is the true one.

SECTION VI.—READING OF TEXTS.

If it were desirable to multiply arguments, we know of none we should rather adduce than the reading consecutively of such texts as contain the word *church*. We will quote a few as specimens, taking them in the order of their occurrence in the New Testament, and then leave the interested inquirer for truth to complete the list by reference to a Greek-English Concordance. Math. XVI: 18—"Upon this rock I will build My church." Math. XVIII: 17—"And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it to the church; and if he neglect to hear the church also, let him be to thee as a heathen and a publican." Acts II: 47—"And the Lord added to the church daily those who are saved." V: 11—"And great fear came upon all the church and upon all that heard these things." VIII: 1—"And on that day there arose a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem." VIII: 3—"But Saul laid waste the

church, entering house after house, and dragging both men and women, committed them to prison." IX: 31—"Then had the churches rest, &c.," or as revised, "The church, therefore, throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria, had peace." XI: 22—"But the report concerning them came to the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem." XI: 26—"And it came to pass, that a whole year they came together in the church, and taught a great multitude." XII: 1—"About that time, Herod, the King, stretched forth his hand to oppress certain of the church." XII: 5—"Peter, therefore, was kept guarded in the prison; but earnest prayer was made by the church, to God, on his behalf."

In this specimen list, in which we have passed but one use of the term *ecclesia*, and that a use which did not respect our Lord's church, we have a fair sample of Scripture usage, and we submit to the common sense of all good men whether, judging from it, the real church is other than a local and organized band of believers.

SECTION VII.—REVIEW AND CONCLUSION.

Cursorily reviewing now our arguments, we see that the common sense impression made by reading texts in which the word *church* occurs, a critical examination of doubtful passages, a careful analysis of the most difficult and important book in the New Testament as respects our subject, early Christian use of terms, and the manifest Scriptural distinction between the church and the kingdom, all concur with the ninety-two (92) unequivocal uses of the term in pronoun-

cing the actual church to be *a local society and never anything but a local society*. They all concur, moreover, in allowing no other uses of the term with respect to our Lord's ecclesia than the generic and true collective, which are the logical derivatives from the local. The Word knows no conflict in terms such as exists where the "local" and Protestant "universal," or the "particular," and the "visible" and "invisible" enter as partners into the same system. Nor does it tolerate, in the presence of its disjointing plurals, a universal church establishment claiming to be exclusively "the church," a church whose unity is one of externals, and which arrogates to itself the sole use of the keys to the kingdom of heaven, thus making men everywhere dependent upon its ministration of grace for the faintest hope of heaven. And as little does it warrant going to the opposite extreme and evaporating the real into the ideal, as do those writers who tell us that "where the the Spirit of the Lord is, there is the church," or they who define the church as "the organic unity of all believers," meaning by organic, "not an outward, mechanical aggregation of facts," however much of vital action they may evince, that is, not a social organization of redeemed men, "but a process of life, which springs from within, from the vital energy implanted in [this ideal, unorganized organism] the church." (*Schaff's Apos. Ch., pp.* 7, 11). It will not even allow us to depart from the strictly local to the broadly spread national or denominational church, in whose deliberations the members generally could not personally share. It holds us steadily and firmly to the rigid local as the

primary and everywhere ruling idea, an idea which itself is a "pillar" of God's precious truth respecting Christian unity as solid as granite and as expressive as tongues of fire. The views of ecclesiology which radiated from it and took form in the modes of expression and church building which immediately followed the apostolic period, should have ruled the Christian world all through these eighteen centuries of conflict, and saved us, not merely the trouble of seeking the truth in the boiling cauldron of ideas into which we are now thrown, but also the advanced progress of Christianity which we might have realized had the soldiers of the cross spent their blows upon a common enemy instead of upon each other.

Unhesitatingly, therefore, do we set aside both of the theories of the church which have mainly ruled the Christian world, together with the unfledged brood of correlated ideas, to fall back upon that which rules throughout the New Testament, and for a few centuries past, has been slowly rising like a morning sun above the horizon of confused thought, changing by degrees truth's twilight reign into the brighter light of growing day. The real church of Christ is a local body, of a definite doctrinal constitution such as is indispensible to "the unity of Spirit" of which it is the embodiment, and of a form of organization such as is yet to be indicated.

We adopt this view in simple fealty to our "one Lord" and his Word, and in no want of respect to the good and great who have thought otherwise. We are well aware that, were our view generally adopted, it

would put a strong hand upon the conflict of the times and materially modify many current opinions and usages. But we are not fearful of results and have not prosecuted our inquiries with any special regard to them. We have faith in God's revealed truth and wish our own course of action to harmonize with it throughout. Human theories we regard as but the cobwebs which truth brushes away as she cleanses the church or the world to make it a suitable habitation for God. Lest, however, some should make undue applications of our theory, or fail to make some which are of consequence, we devote, in Part Third, a little additional space specifically to them.

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PART SECOND.

THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH CONSTITUTION.

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PART SECOND.

CHAPTER I.

FORM OF CHURCH GOVERNMENT.

IN approaching the constitution or structural form of the church, we shall proceed, as would be natural in approaching a material object from a distance, to notice its more salient features first. Hence, we first speak of government. We shall, moreover, pass unnoticed some things which properly belong to our subject, as being more commonly treated by writers upon the church and tending to prolong our discussion to an undesirable length. We shall assume that the only proper subjects for membership in the church are believers in Christ or regenerate persons, and that the only method of induction is by immersion in or into "the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."

Conceiving of the church constitution as a growth, and discriminating between the embryonic and the full grown structure, it is proper to remark that we are now concerned only with the latter. We are to gather such rays of light as we are able upon its completed form, that form in which it was expected to come down to us and remotest posterity after us. Our present

business will be to inquire *whether a definite form of government is given in the New Testament, and if so, what it is?*

Section I.—Is There a Definite Form Given?

A very current opinion is, that there is no definite form given. The *jure divino* doctrine of the fathers is largely abandoned. Prof. Roswell D. Hitchcock, of Union Theological Seminary of New York, uses the following language: "The fact is, no polity is described in detail in the New Testament. Nor is the polity that was actually instituted so sharply defined as we must think it would have been had it been meant for a precise and final pattern. The two sacraments are positive, and the great ends to be accomplished, both in time and in eternity, are palpable enough. The visibly officered church is evidently a necessity, and will be to the end of time. But precisely how this church shall be organized and officered, is left, we think, to the best judgment of the church, as its theater is shifted and its circumstances change." (*Pres. Rev.* 1868, *p.* 265). His position is, that a polity somewhat general in its character was given, but is not authoritatively prescribed. Rev. E. L. Payne, Professor of Ecclesiastical History in the Bangor Theological Seminary, Maine, uses the following language: "Christ himself gave no specific directions to his disciples concerning the establishment of his visible church; and throughout the records of the apostolic age there are no indications of a fixed and artificial organization. The customs and forms of the

Christian community took shape freely, according to its growing wants." And so, he thinks, they were always intended to do. Hence, while he finds precedent for Congregationalism, he does not claim that it is always binding or always best. (*New Englander, quoted by Ex. and Chron. Nov.* 9, 1871).

Both of these writers, it will be perceived, agree in the opinion that the New Testament does present a church polity more or less definite, though they disagree as to what it is, the one thinking it to be the Presbyterian, and the other, the Congregational. Both agree also in the opinion, that the polity presented is not binding upon all; the one, for the reason that he thinks it is not as clearly defined as it ought to be, if such were the intention, and the other, because of the element of freedom manifested in its construction. They present us, then, for our consideration, the question of the authority of precedent. They both seem to feel that it has some authority, for they both propose for themselves such a form of church government as they find in New Testament precedent. But they think that such considerations as they present, in some measure abate that authority.

Before proceeding to a direct consideration of the authority of precedent, it is worth while to remark the harmony between the main view presented in the statements quoted, and that which prevails concerning the church in its fundamental idea. The latter is either universal or local; the former, either Presbyterian, Congregational, or such as "the best judgment" and "circumstances" may dictate; both correspondingly

loose or indefinite, and hence harmonious. But if we have arrived at the truth concerning the fundamental idea of the church, and it is as definite as we have endeavored to show, it is somewhat probable that in constitution it may be equally definite and precise. It is said, with some show of probability to be sure, that "Christ himself gave no specific directions to his disciples concerning the establishment of his visible church;" but this is by no means sure. What directions he gave them in that mountain of Galilee, to which they retired after his resurrection, we do not know. Certainly he said many things which are not recorded, for John assures us that the world itself would not contain the record of his deeds. Moreover, the Holy Spirit was to lead them into all truth, and did give Paul, the great church architect, a multitude of revelations. But shall we not have to concede that "the polity which was actually instituted," is not as "sharply defined as we must think it would have been had it been meant for a precise and final pattern?" We answer, this depends upon the divine purpose in the revelation given. If God intended to strip the subject of all mystery, so as to save us any study or questioning upon the matter, we say, "Yes, we must concede." But if he intended study, not merely of the Word, but of history and the philosophy of history, to be a means of grace; if he intended, we should comprehend church polities in their relations to human minds, and to the dissemination and preservation of great fundamental truths; if he meant that we should sense the force of systems as well as work them, we reply, "No,

the very want of definiteness or clearness may be an essential element in the divine scheme of training." All that can be said on this score, can be alleged with equal force on the subject of justification by faith, regeneration by the Spirit, or the atonement itself. Indeed, the very character of Christ has drawn forth manyfold more controversies than has the subject of church organization or government.

Section II.—The Authority of Precedent.

Coming to the question of the authority of precedent, we apprehend that there is really but one opinion among those who believe there is authority in the words of Christ, when he says to every disciple, "Follow me," or who admit the propriety of Paul's saying: "I beseech you, therefore, brethren, be followers of me." To follow, is to imitate example or repeat precedent. Example or precedent, therefore, is authority. Many usages of unquestioned propriety or obligation rest upon it exclusively. Where is the express command for a prayer meeting or the dissemination of the gospel by the press or publishing society? On what specific injunction rests ordination or the giving of a letter of commendation?

The only difficulty in the case consists, we apprehend, in determining what is precedent in mixed cases like the one before us. If we look for it in every minute feature of the case, we are troubled; while if we look for it in the final outcome or in the general drift of events, all may be clear. Interpreting precedent in such cases is very much like interpreting parables.

If we attempt to force an analogy between the parable and that which it illustrates in every conceivable feature of resemblance, we become mere moony wanderers in theology. But if we accept of the analogy as actually given, and call all else our own speculation, we shall walk in the light as children of the light. Let us illustrate our position. Paul was an Apostle to the Gentiles, and taught that "neither circumcision avails anything, nor uncircumcision." Yet, when he would have Timothy "go forth with him, he took and circumcised him, because of the Jews who were in those places." Again, the mother church at Jerusalem encouraged the work of evangelization among the Gentiles, on the ground that God had given "the like gift to them," as to themselves, and yet, as late as when Paul made his last visit to Jerusalem, was characterized by James and the elders as "all zealots for the law," and especially for circumcision. Here is a decidedly mixed case of precedent bearing upon the subject of circumcision, and yet probably no one would now have any difficulty in deciding what New Testament precedent requires upon that subject. And the simple reason is, not that we are expressly commanded, either to circumcise or not to circumcise, but because no one would seek for precedent in every sinuosity of action controlled by circumstances, but in the general drift of events; not in the specific things done in the infancy of a movement, but in its final outcomes. In other words, precedent in a case so mixed consists in the general and not in the minutiæ. Such is the case before us, only far more extensive and multiform. Hence we are

to look for precedent, not in the incidentals or partial developments attendant upon the growth of the church constitution, but in the ripened facts into which these ultimated. These partial growths may serve as good commentaries upon the ultimates or ripened fruit, but the latter are the essentials to the church constitution. Thus, when the epistles to the Corinthians and Romans were written, gifts are more prominent than offices, but when some four to ten years later the epistles to the Ephesians and to Timothy were written, offices are more prominent than gifts, the gifts meanwhile having crystalized, so far as was desirable, into clearly cut offices. Inquiring then for New Testament precedent on the subject of church offices, we must go beyond the enumeration of gifts or their mixed presentation with offices in those earlier epistles to the more clearly defined offices to which gifts pointed, and into which they ultimated. So in the matter of doctrines. We may find doctrines presented singly here and there through the word of God, but if we ask for those which are essential to the church constitution or the relation of such to their logical outgrowths, we must wait until the fourth chapter of the epistle to the Ephesians is written, in the latter part of the great church builder's career, about the year A. D. 62.

But let us illustrate a little further. Precedent, like positive command, having a restrictive as well as a mandatory bearing, in order to be authoritative, would often give us great trouble if it descended to all the minutiæ of work and worship. It would require us to vote by lot (perhaps), to observe the Lord's supper

in connection with a common meal, to wash the disciples' feet literally, to annoint the sick irrespective of climatal or other considerations, to worship in private houses, to discard Sunday Schools and Covenant meetings, to dismiss church clerks and trustees, to abandon our Associational, Bible, tract, missionary, college and theological seminary work, *et cet.* But interpreting precedent in the common sense way we have indicated, we have no trouble, however much in some of the minutiæ of our work we may diverge from even apostolic methods, because we believe precedent respects in such cases principles rather than methods. The lot is not the precedent, but the reliance upon God which it bespoke, if it were really a lot; the voting fairly, if it were a ballot. The feet-washing is not the precedent, but the condescending service to brethren which it bespoke in Palestine and the east generally, but which it would not so well bespeak where the habits of the people were different. The breaking of bread in connection with a full meal is not the precedent, but the breaking of bread in remembrance of Christ. That which is really precedent is binding in all these cases. The question is, What is precedent? The same we take to be true of the church as respects its government, officers or constitution. Determine what precedent really is, and we fail to see in what it lacks divine inspiration as its source or divine authority to enforce it.

Section III.—The Element of Freedom.

As to the element of freedom manifest in the formation of precedent destroying its authority, if that freedom was ensured just the formation it wrought, by apostolic safeguards and providential arrangements as well as by the nature of the indwelling spirit, then the authority of the precedent it established would seem to be trebly strong instead of wholly or even partially abated. Moreover it would seem to follow that with any proper reference to New Testament teaching, freedom must always ultimate in the same precedent, in which case to emphasize the freedom would be tantamount to emphasizing the precedent. But we must not forget that it was in "the fullness of times" that God put the free Christian spirit, under apostolic tutelage, to making precedent. The most famous governments of all antiquity, if we except the Israelitish, had been wrought upon for more than a thousand years to bring them to the perfection which they finally reached in Athens and Sparta or in the Free-Cities of the apostles' day. They then very nearly resembled the government of Israel in their general features, thus, with it, pouring two invisible streams of influence upon the Christian mind to ensure the adoption of that form of government we find in the first churches. Minos in Crete, Lycurgus in Sparta, Solon in Athens, each the great lawgiver of his time and people, all wrought for Christ and his church, and, by the general principles of government

in which they agree, report themselves in the form of government adopted by these churches. More than this,—these general principles are demanded by the native instincts of humanity, and the world is moving for them to-day as it has been for thousands of years in the past. Surely, then, the precedent which embodies them has some authority.

Section IV.—Divine Teaching.

And yet we do not rest our cause upon such considerations, as convincing as we think they ought to be. We rely rather upon the current of the Saviour and the apostles' teaching. If the word "follow," already quoted, is not sufficient to establish the authority of precedent, the reader will please remember that Christ commissioned his apostles to teach his baptized disciples "all things whatsoever he had commanded them," and that in pursuance of this command they proceeded to found, organize and officer churches, as well as to give them ordinances and rules of worship; in other words, to create what we have called New Testament precedent. Remember, also, how Paul praised his brethren for observing the ordinances or usages as they were handed to him and by him to them from the Saviour, and what authority they must have carried to a people who, from Moses downward, had been accustomed to think all things in constitution or worship should correspond to a pattern given. Especially remember that we have already established the local as the only real church, and that this, from the nature

of the case, must have a constitution of some kind, while among all the churches which appear in New Testament history there is no conclusive evidence of there being a variety of constitutions. With such teachings and facts it would be a waste of time to multiply proofs of the authority of precedent relative to the church constitution. But precedent being authority, we have a constitution more or less definite which we are bound to adopt, even the opposers of the idea being judges.

Section V.—The Form of Government Given.

We now face the question: *What is the form of government divinely prescribed for the completed New Testament church?*

Three different forms present competing claims to such recognition, usually named the Episcopal, the Presbyterian and the Congregational. The first is sometimes denominated the prelatical, because it vests power mainly, if not exclusively, in the hands of its ministry; and sometimes the monarchical, because a single ruler is usually found at its head, as a Pope, a King or Queen, a Bishop. The Presbyterian, taking its name from a presbytery or eldership, is sometimes called aristocratic, because a few persons rule; and sometimes republican, because those few stand as representatives of the people or the societies. The Congregational is also called democratic, because the people are said to rule. But neither of these terms is exactly definitive, for in neither case is legislation the

business of the governing body, Christ being the supreme legislator or governor. Moreover, these terms fail to present the different ideas of the term *church* which characterize these different forms of government. Under the Episcopal and Presbyterian the idea is duplex, but is mainly expressed by the term *denomination;* as when we say the Catholic church, meaning all those societies which come under the rule of its supreme pontiff. A stricter definition still of the first or Episcopal church, would be the three orders of the clergy, without which there is no church and with which there is, according to the opinion of some, whether it be with or without members. (*Ignatius to Trallians, Chap. III*). Under the third or democratic polity, church, as related to the subject of government, means invariably *a local society*, as for example, the church in Corinth, the Baptist church of Adrian. Again, the term *democratic* means both literally and popularly *the people ruling*, while in ancient usage, as for the most part in modern, really only a part of the people participated in the government, as for instance, the free citizens of Athens, who really constituted but a minority of the male population.

If now we establish the claim of the Congregational or democratic polity, we need not examine the others in detail as they of necessity yield theirs. It bears against them strongly, however, that the term *church* in their sense of denomination no where occurs in the New Testament. There can, therefore, be no denominational church government. As referring to an

organized ecclesiastical body it invariably means a local society. Church government to be scriptural, then, must be such as a local and independent society can adopt.

But now we will attend to some of the evidences that the government of the New Testament church is democratic.

Section VI.—Ruling of a Free Spirit.

If we appeal to the free spirit among the members, which, as we have seen in our introduction, was to determine so largely its external, governmental form, we shall conclude, we think, that it could not be other than democratic. "The monarchical form of government," says Neander, "was not suited to the Christian community of Spirit." (*Ch. Hist. I.*, 183). "The spirit of Christianity," he adds, "points everywhere to the feeling of a mutual need of help; to the necessity and to the great advantage, as well of common counsel as of common prayer." The Jesuitical creed, which teaches the inferior to be as passive as a corpse in the hand of his superior, may be in harmony with the concentrated monarchism of the Papal system, but is not in harmony with the impulses of a new creature in Christ Jesus. That distinguished civilian and scholar, Chevalier Bunsen, who well understood the monarchico-prelatical system, speaking of the Christian's life says, "its aim and object is the development of a free conscious moral personality. The root of the ecclesia and her divine life is personality,—that alone is an end in itself." (*Signs of the Times, p.* 364). It is of

the very nature of the new birth to energize the man and thus create a demand for a new and self-determining activity in the kingdom of God. It may well be doubted whether he knows anything experimentally of the spirit of Christ who does not both feel and assert his kinship with God's people in work as well as in worship. Hence, the Apostle Peter affirms the universal priesthood of all Christians,—a most important doctrine, which, when it retired into the back ground, according to Neander, left the church in the gloom of the dark ages. The Apostle Paul also, both emphasizes and guards our idea, when he says to the Galatians: "Ye are called unto liberty, brethren, only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another."

Section VII.—Force of Ecclesia.

If we refer to the use of the term, ἐκκλησία, of which *church* is the ordinary translation, the argument is equally conclusive. In Athens, under the constitution of Solon, the functions of legislation were divided between a senate of four hundred (afterward increased to five hundred) and an assembly or ἐκκλησία of free-born and naturalized citizens. No decree of the senate became law until it had been ratified by such an assembly, which convened regularly once a month and in emergencies oftener. The term literally means *the called out*, in allusion to the public crier or herald, by whom the citizens were summoned to meet, and is used a few times in the New Testament, where no reference is had to an ecclesiastical body. As indicating the

called of God, however, those who by the heralds of the gospel have been called out of the world into Christian churches for attending to the business of heaven's kingdom, the use is very pertinent and beautiful. But it loses its entire force the moment governmental authority is vested in a senate of elders or in "the three orders of the clergy" instead of in the citizens or people. It may include the clergy or senate as a part of the people or as a branch of the government, but must not exclude those whom it especially designates,—the people of the church, or at least the adult male portion.

Section VIII.—Precedent Conclusive.

But our main evidence must come from New Testament precedent which, so far as we are able to see, is universally harmonious with the democratic idea. We have indicated that it is quoted otherwise. Apostolic authority is conceived to have been of the absolute or mandatory character and to have flowed along the line of an apostolic succession to the present time, supporting thus the monarchical idea of government. But we do not so read or understand the scriptures. Neither was the authority strictly mandatory, nor did it flow down the line of an apostolic succession. There may have been a nearer approach to the mandatory than would be appropriate in any of Christ's ministers now, for in the inauguration of any new movement some one must assume a greater responsibility than would be necessary after the movement was fully organized and launched. Such is the case with every missionary who

builds churches upon hitherto unoccupied ground. But it is evident that neither the apostles nor those to whom they went understood that they took upon themselves the decision of questions which the churches were competent to manage. As their Divine Master had taught, the apostles recognized the churches as competent to "bind and loose" within appropriate limits, that is, limits which did not trench upon the necessary sphere of revelation. And the churches claimed the right, else the church of Corinth had not for a moment thought of putting Apollos in competition with either Paul or Cephas, nor had James and the elders of the Jerusalem church, on the occasion of Paul's last and perilous visit to Jerusalem, warned him against the coming together of a multitude of the disciples upon their hearing of his arrival. (*Acts* XXI: 22). But whatever may have been the authority of the apostles, it certainly did not flow down in the line of an apostolic succession. The grand peculiarity of the apostolic office, being, that its incumbents had received personal instructions from the Lord Jesus, it is impossible to have successors in it. Consequently apostolic authority ended with or still vests in the original and only incumbents of the office, whose writings still speak for them and who address churches as though possessed of governmental authority.

We need not prolong the discussion. The churches actually did use authority, under apostolic sanction, and that settles the question. During the Pentecostal prayer meeting "Peter stood up in the midst of the brethren" and pointed out the necessity of their elect-

ing an incumbent to the vacated apostolate of Judas. Whereupon they nominated two, and after prayer gave their lots, (votes perhaps), which resulted in the choice of Matthias. Here was democracy in the scarcely born church as though native to it. In the selection of the seven deacons, the apostles directed "the multitude of the disciples" to look out the appropriate persons. In the matter of circumcision, which so disturbed the church at Antioch, and on which reference was made to the "apostles and elders" at Jerusalem, it was the church at Antioch which ordered the reference and the church at Jerusalem which rendered the decision. And it is also to be noted, that in the communication sent from Jerusalem to Antioch, "the brethren throughout Antioch and Syria and Celicia" are addressed. Again churches are addressed and expected to act in matters of discipline. In the fifth of 1 Corinthians, Paul tells the church of Corinth what to do in cases of gross immorality. In the sixteenth chapter of his epistle to the Romans he entreats "the brethren" to "mark those who cause divisions and offences contrary to the teaching which they had learned, and avoid them." In the first letter to the Thessalonians the "brethren" are directed to admonish the unruly; in the second, they are commanded, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, to withdraw themselves from every brother who walks disorderly. In Revelation, the Spirit addresses himself to the churches as the responsible parties in the matters of which he speaks. "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." Even in the appointment of eld-

ers in the churches of Asia, the word *χειροτονήσατες* strongly suggests that it was by vote of the members, it meaning literally to lift the hand as in voting.

Section IX.—Historic Testimony.

We need not multiply references. These are clear, unequivocal and decided. They prove, as well as a thousand cases could do, that the churches were treated by the apostles as the repositories of such power as the Lord has committed to his people. Their government, then, must have been democratic. And so we are happy to add the leading church historians as well as the apostolic fathers agree. Mosheim says: "The people were undoubtedly the first in authority; for the apostles showed by their own example that nothing of any moment was to be carried on without the consent of the assembly; and such a method was both prudent and necessary in those critical times." (*Eccl. His.*, *p.* 21). As to church independence the following from the same source is very explicit: "Neither in the New Testament nor in any ancient document whatever do we find anything recorded from whence it might be inferred, that any of the minor churches were at all dependent on or looked for direction to those of greater magnitude or consequence; on the contrary, several things occur which put it out of all doubt that every one of them enjoyed the same rights and was considered as being on a footing of perfect equality with the rest." Neander viewed the Jewish Christian church as differing somewhat from the Gentile. "The view we are led to form of the

original constitution of the churches among the Gentile Christians, as they existed in the apostolic age, *that it was entirely democratic*, is one of the distinguishing marks between the churches of Gentile and those of Jewish origin." (*Pl. and Train'g I.*, 142). But his distinction is of somewhat doubtful propriety. As late as the third century, according to him, in the election of church officers the ancient principle was adhered to, that the consent of the community (church) was necessary to the validity of every such election, and each one was at liberty to offer reasons against it. He quotes Cyprian, bishop of Carthage, who was separated from his people by persecution, as apologizing to them for a somewhat unusual course, necessitated by the exigencies of the times, in the matter of filling offices: "We are used to call you together for counsel whenever any are to be consecrated to sacred offices," said Cyprian, "and to weigh the character and claims of each candidate in common deliberation." Undoubtedly the democratic principle had lost its hold upon the churches somewhat at this time, but not entirely.

Canon second of the canons of the church of Alexander, preserved among the writings of Hippolytus, says: "A bishop should be elected by all the people, and he should be unimpeachable, as it is written of him in the Apostle; in the week in which he is ordained the people should also say, We desire him; and there should be silence in the whole hall, and they should all pray in his behalf and say, O God, establish

him whom thou hast prepared for us, *et cet.*" (*Hippol. II.*, 138).

Calvin says: "Anciently none were admitted to the number of the clergy without the consent of the whole people." Again he says: "In electing bishops the people long retained their right of preventing any one from being intruded who was not acceptable to all. Accordingly it was forbidden by the council of Antioch to induct any one on the unwilling. This also Leo I. carefully confirms. Hence these passages: "Let him be elected whom the clergy and the people or the majority demand;" again, "Let him who is to preside over all be elected by all." (*Calvin's Institutes II.*, 334, 335).

"The depositary of right and law within her (Christianity's) communion, says Bunsen, is the ecclesia,—the congregation possessing its own members and its own independence." (*Signs of the Times*, 91).

"The government was wholly popular," says Lyman Coleman. He also quotes Greiling approvingly, who says: "The principle on which the apostles proceeded was that the church, that is, the elders and the members of the church unitedly, were the depositaries of all their social rights, and that no others could exercise this right but those to whom the church might entrust it, and who were accordingly amenable to the church." (*Church Without a Bishop*, 36, 37).

The writings of the Apostolic Fathers clearly indicate the democracy of the churches. Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna, and who, according to Ireneus, "was instructed by the apostles, and was brought into contact

with many who had seen Christ," in a letter to the church at Philippi, in which he laments the conduct of Valens, one of their presbyters, implies their sole jurisdiction in the case when he says to them: "Be ye then moderate in regard to this matter, and do not count such as enemies, but call them back as suffering and straying members that ye may save your whole body." (*Apos. Fathers*, 67, 75).

Clement, supposed to be the same to whom Paul refers in the Epistle to the Philippians (IV: 3), writes on behalf of the church in Rome to the distracted church in Corinth, exhorting them to peace and unity as follows: "Who then among you is noble minded? Who compassionate? Who full of love? Let him declare, If on my account sedition and disagreement and schisms have arisen, I will depart; I will go away whithersoever ye desire, and will do whatever the majority (literally the multitude) commands; only let the flock of Christ live on terms of peace with the presbyters set over it." (*Apos. Fathers*, 45).

The same Clement, in the same epistle, referring to those appointed to the ministry by the apostles or their successors, speaks of them as so appointed "with the consent of the whole church," (*p.* 39). In like manner, we read in the Syriac Documents that Addeus, the apostle, "called for Aggeus before the whole assembly of the church, and bade him draw near, and made him ruler and guide in his stead." (*p.* 29).

According to Mosheim, ultimate authority was vested in the church until the third century. But "the face of things now began to change. The an-

cient method of ecclesiastical government seemed in general still to subsist, while at the same time, by imperceptible steps, it varied from the primitive rule, and degenerated toward the form of religious monarchy." (*Cent. III, Pt. II, Chap.* 2, *Sec.* 3).

Section X.—Conclusion.

But we will adduce testimony no further. If anything is susceptible of proof it must be regarded as certain that the democratic principle held sway in the churches of the apostles' times. And if so, it has God's seal of approval and should have our unwavering support. It would, of course, be the height of folly to assume that it is a perfect panacea for all church ills. It was not such in the apostles' days, as the unhappy discord in the Corinthian church and the sad defections in the churches of Asia Minor, whose dull ears the Spirit tried so hard to get, abundantly attest. Nor is it such in our day when it flourishes as at no former period since the first century of the Christian era. Ecclesiastical democracy encounters many dangers as civil democracy had done long before it, chief among which is, not the monarchical element in the state which anciently subverted and always operates powerfully against it, but that against which Paul warned the "bewitched" Galatians,—the danger of using "liberty as an occasion to the flesh," that is, of running into lawlessness on the plea of freedom. Out of this grow the seditions which have always been the bane of democracy, and are to this day, especially to the committee-of-the-whole kind

which prevails in most of the churches whose government is the democratic. The gospel net gathers of "every kind," whence it is too much to suppose that it will contain no troublers of Zion, no seditious or heady persons who will think more of ruling than they do of obeying. More Baptist churches are troubled or wrecked by such characters, probably, than by all other causes combined. So many of them conducting their democracy on the loose plan referred to, they are on the reefs of discord before they are aware of their danger.

Nevertheless, democratic freedom properly defined is God's gift to his churches, and is vastly more eminent in its uses than in its abuses. It is in perfect accord with the divine policy which requires "each one to give account of himself to God," whether in the sphere of every day practical life, Christian theology or Christian ecclesiology. It is eminently adapted to promote spirituality, which is the life force of the churches, it bringing each member into intimate and conscious relations with the Head of the church, who is the source of all life and power. It is, moreover, equally well adapted to protect sound doctrine, all ecclesiastical history showing that the people are the best conservators of the truth, the assumptions of papal and other hierarchies to the contrary notwithstanding. One reason of this is, the people have fewer temptations to sacrifice the truth than have a dominating and ambitious priesthood. The people want truth to eat as the bread of life rather than to sell for the ends it may promote. Another reason is, democratic

freedom is not given to display as is monarchical and even aristocratic power, and display is very expensive in a spiritual as well as in a pecuniary or political sense. It is a sorry thing to see the toiling masses of a people dwindling under its withering blight in all the elements of a happy and noble manhood, even while they gaze in wonder and admiration at its splendors. Like the charm of the serpent, it allures to kill. Democratic freedom or the voluntary principle is unequalled as an evangelizing potency. That eminent friend of the people, John Bright, accords to it the building of more churches in ten years than the hierarchical had built in the last three hundred years. On no other than the democratic basis can Peter's doctrine of the universal priesthood rest, that doctrine whose prevalence gives such luster to the Christianity of the nineteenth century, and whose non-prevalence drew such a pall of night over that of "the dark ages." "The key that unlocks the significance of the world's history," said Bunsen, "is the knowledge of the realization of the divine in the development of humanity; in that building of the temple of God which is raised of the living stones that *with conscious personality freely join themselves together*."

But we must not ignore a knotty problem out of which grows the strongest argument of the opposers of democracy. We will state and treat it in another chapter.

CHAPTER II.

SCRIPTURAL METHOD OF CONDUCTING A DEMOCRACY.

IT is weakness to shut one's eyes to the strength of an opponent. An ostrich which has no better defence may hide its head in the sand when the hunter is near, but the Christian teacher had better look him boldly and kindly in the eye, ready to answer his arguments or consider his objections.

SECTION I.—A KNOTTY PROBLEM.

We intimated at the close of the former chapter that we had one knotty problem to solve, before our plea for democracy as the government of the New Testament church was complete. Over against the idea of individual freedom, which is so prominent both in the New Testament and among the advocates of democracy, stand spiritual gifts and official functions which are equally prominent, both in the New Testament and among the advocates of other forms of government. While the one idea appears to put all members of a church upon the dead level of equality in privilege and power, the other appears to introduce great inequalities and render the democratic theory utterly untenable. We cannot decently or honestly ignore the difficulty, but must meet and solve it in harmony with

democracy, or grant that while democracy is taught in the New Testament, as we showed in the former chapter, another form of government is also taught in which power vests, not in the people, but in their rulers. We propose to meet the difficulty fairly.

Let us then state it more fully, that we may understand its precise nature. Over against, "Ye are all one in Christ Jesus," and Peter's "royal priesthood" of the whole church, stand such discriminations as these, "For as we have many members in one body, and all the members have not the same office; so we, the many, are one body in Christ, and severally members one of another. And having gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, [let us prophesy] according to the proportion of our faith; or ministry, [let us wait,] on the ministry; or he that teaches, on the teaching; or that he exhorts, on the exhortation; he that gives, [let him do it] with simplicity; he that presides, (*rules* in the common version) with diligence; he that shows mercy, with cheerfulness." (*Rom.* XII: 4–8). "Now ye are the body of Christ, and members each one. And God set some in the church, apostles first, secondly prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governings, diversities of tongues. Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Are all workers of miracles? Have all gifts of healings? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret?" (1 *Cor.* XII: 27–30). In these passages and others of a similar import, the idea of oneness in the sense of perfect and absolute equality is invaded by the idea of diversity of gifts and func-

tions, showing that the former must be modified, that New Testament individualism, in other words, is not one which recognizes the fitness of all members for the same work or offices, that is, one without limitations. And among the gifts granted to the church by its divine head are found "governings," from which it is argued that the government of the church was not in the hands of the members, but was committed to persons who had the gift of governing. And as the same gift is apparently referred to in the first passage quoted, under the form of presiding, or ruling as it is in the common version, an office work commonly ascribed to the eldership, it is argued that the government of the church is vested in that body. The passages which look in this direction are such as these, "Let the elders who preside well be counted worthy of double honor, especially they who labor in the word and teaching." (1 *Tim.* v: 17). "Obey those who are your leaders, and submit; for they watch for your souls, as those who shall give account." (*Heb.* xiii: 17). "If one knows not how to preside over his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?" (1 *Tim.* iii: 5). In view of these and similar passages which might be added, it is not to be denied, that in some sense, governing is committed to the eldership. Men who *oversee*, *teach*, act as *pastors* or *shepherds* toward a flock, *preside* in some sense as a father presides over his family, *lead* as a military general, governor of a province, or even as a prince of thought or speech; (ἡγεμών or οἱ ἡγούμενοι. cf. *Mat.* x: 18; xxvii: 2; *Acts* xxiii: 24; 1 *Pt.* ii: 14; *Luke* xxii: 26; *Acts* xiv: 12; xv: 22);

men who are to be *obeyed* in any sense, who are selected for their official position because, among other things, they have the gift of *governing* (*κυβέρνησις*—for the force of this term, cf. its cognate *κυβέρνήτης* translated *master* in *Acts* XXVII: 11; *Rev.* XVIII, 17);—men who are so characterized, we say, do not stand upon the dead level of the multitude, but in some sense are expected to govern them.

Morover, the eldership of the Christian church is derived by our opponents from that of the Jewish synagogue and is inferred to have similar powers, which is thought to be adverse to democracy. Hence, says a writer in the *Presbyterian Review*, (George Sidney Camp, 1865, p. 247,): "The presbyters or elders were governors in every sense of the word. . . . . Hence a form of church government which is a pure democracy, and which consequently admits of no such body of officials and recognizes no such duty, has no just claim to be regarded the primitive form." This is the strong argument against democracy, and is conclusive to many minds of the first order. It cannot be met by a denial of plain Scripture facts. Some kind of governing authority is clearly vested in the eldership, whether in any other body of church officials or not, and we must recognize it. Can we do so in harmony with any just interpretation of democracy? Clearly we must do so, if our conclusion in the last chapter was well taken. We shall attempt to show a harmony and, for the encouragement of the incredulous, will say, that we do not anticipate a more difficult task than to show a harmony between divine sovereignty and human freedom.

Clearly, however, the task would be hopeless in the hands of an extremist in the direction of either individualism or official authority.

Section II.—The Problem Solved and Harmony Found.

In seeking the required harmony it will, therefore, be pertinent to remark:

1. That it is not to be sought by either magnifying or minifying *the idea of governing* as attributed to the eldership or as expressed in the term *governings*.

It is not our business now to define the idea farther than to guard against these dangers. The term *governings* is of the Holy Spirit's choice, and hence is to be treated as a sacred treasure. Besides, the cause of truth needs no unfair advocacy. Yet it is important to remember that, in the ordinary sense of governing, a Christian church has very little work to do. "The law of the Spirit of life" which frees men from "the law of sin and death," is the main governing power. No legislative work is to be done, and no penalties administered severer than withdrawing the hand of church fellowship. Hence the idea of governing must not be stilted too high. Nor, again, must it be reduced too low. It means more than weight of personal influence. This is doubtless a governing power in whomsoever may possess it. But official position adds something as well as receives. Increased responsibility, such as it imposes, is of right attended by increased authority. In some sense, then, governing is the right as well as duty of office, and hence must not be ignored.

2. Nσ more must we press the idea of *equality as involved in the doctrine of individualism* in unjustifiable ways or degrees.

No more than in the other case is it now our province to define fully. We need simply to guard against an extreme fatal to the harmony we seek. In our country, where the motto is, "all men free and equal," we are liable to extremes. In respect of "certain inaleniable rights," it may be true that all men are equal and ought to be free. But in the absolute, every school-boy knows, that men are no more equal mentally or morally than they are physically. And what is true elsewhere is equally true in the church. "In Christ Jesus," that is, in the matter of vital union with Christ, which is the most radical and important thing in practical Christianity, believers "are all one." But in respect of Spiritual gifts, they are by inspiration said to be diverse, or to be "*many* members in one body." In Christ Jesus, they are neither male nor female, but in the organized church, inspiration makes a distinction of sex as well as of duty, allowing to the one sex what it does not to the other. In seeking a harmony between the two classes of Scripture texts before us, we must let facts be facts, without enlargement or diminution.

Leaving these preliminaries, we now remark:

3. That the harmony needed can be found, we think, in *a proper discrimination as to the New Testament method of conducting a democracy.*

Not noticing insignificant minutiæ, it is easy to discover two methods radically different from each other;

as different in their practical effects as the difference between any two forms of government that can be named. The one may be designated, *doing everything in committee of the whole*, the other, *dividing deliberations and assigning duties on the basis of gifts.*

The first method not only recognizes the church as merely an assembly in which equality in an extreme sense prevails, but, pressed to its farthest limits, allows the introduction of any kind of business, at any time, and by any member, and requires the settlement of all questions, however trivial, to be by the body at large, which it would also make the executor of its decisions rather than delegate the duty to individual members. Possibly this is the "pure democracy" referred to in the review before quoted. But this is an extreme to which, practically, no body of men ever went, we suppose, though sometimes they approach very near it. In practice, a part of the second method is nearly always introduced, at least so far as to empower a few executive officers and possibly a few committees.

The second method is the one universally adopted by civil democracies, and consists in dividing deliberations between two or more branches or houses of the general government, usually denominated a *senate* and an *assembly*. The republics (democracies) of Carthage, Sparta and Athens were each so divided. So were the free cities of the apostles' days which Rome allowed to govern themselves, and which retained the ancient form of Grecian democracy in these particulars. We have an allusion to such a government in Ephesus, in Acts XIX: 38, 39, where the city clerk said

to the mob gathered in the theater, and furious for the destruction of Paul: "If, therefore, Demetrius and the craftsmen with him, have a matter against any man, the law is open and there are proconsuls; let them implead one another. But if ye make any demand concerning other matters, it shall be determined in *the lawful assembly*, (*εκκλησία*)," (cf. Acts XVII: 56; *Conybear and Howson's Life of Paul*, *I.*, 334). The lawful assembly was composed of the citizens duly called and not of an indiscriminate mob such as was gathered in the theater. In Athens, Solon's senate of five hundred composed of men chosen from the various tribes, and none less than thirty years of age, held daily sessions, festival days excepted, and reduced its deliberations to what were called *decrees*. These were presented to the lawful assembly of citizens, and when approved by that body, but not before, became laws. The assembly, on the other hand, acted upon no important measure until it had first been passed upon by the senate. But the same division of deliberation is practiced in all our legislative bodies, and our readers are so familiar with it we need not detail facts further.

Now suppose this second method to have been the one substantially, though not in every minute feature, adopted by the Christian church; can any one fail to see how the harmony we seek is secured? That guiding senate or eldership answers to the gifts and governments so emphasized on the one hand, while ultimate authority vested in the assembly answers to the individualism of the other. And yet the government

is purely democratic all the while, power never passing from the hands of the people. It is simply a wiser and safer democracy than the other. The first method is that of men in their inexperience, when they know but partially either the demands or dangers attendant upon popular government. It is boyish, sophomoric. The second is that of men who have grown wise by their experience, having learned that haste often makes waste, and that, while in a very broad and important sense all men are of right free and equal, in other senses they are very far from equal, and ought not to be so free as to be allowed to run riot with the interests of the whole body politic or ecclesiastic.

Section III.—Scripture Confirmation.

With this imperfect presentation of the second method before us, we now come to the question of fact: Is it the New Testament method? We shall endeavor to show that it is, and, if successful, shall claim that democracy is confirmed by another very strong argument. We think it is the New Testament method:

§. *The Earth Helps the Woman.*

1. Because it seems to us incredible that, when the church took some suggestions from "the fullness of times" in regard to its constitution, as every scholar is agreed that it did, it should not have embodied that particular feature of government which the wisdom of ages has approved and applied to almost every State and municipal organization from the days of the patri-

archs to the present time. Indeed, the idea of a senate is but a modification of that of patriarch, both terms meaning literally *old men* or *fathers*. The terms *elder* and *presbyter*, the Arab *sheik* and the English *alderman* all mean the same, that is, old men, and all signify that in the estimation of both God and men, wisdom belongs rather to years than to youth. Not to review Israel under the leadership of Moses or Joshua and his senate of seventy; nor the later Jewish polity embracing a council of seventy for the people at large, and a similar, though smaller council in every village and synagogue; not to review in detail the ancient democracies and free cities, nor our modern national governments with their time honored senates and assemblies, we call the reader's attention to our municipal governments for an illustration of the tenacity with which men cling to our second method. Though the citizens may confer more or less of authority, there is not a city in the land, we suppose, which has not a common council composed of a mayor or president and a board of aldermen, (elders or senators), who constitute the leading branch of government. If the government be republican rather than democratic, it only lays an extra if an unwise emphasis upon the guiding senate. The idea of such a senate appears to have possessed the whole civilized world, and may therefore be justly considered to have some merit if the old maxim be of any value, which says, "the voice of the people is the voice of God." If then "the earth helped the woman" at all in the way of her institutions, it is incredible that this feature of its wisdom

should have made no impression, and especially so as we find the women using the very names which described this method of government, *senate* or *eldership* and *church*, *εκκλησία*.

§. *Harmony Suggestive.*

2. *Furnishing the required* harmony is, as we conceive, a strong presumptive argument.

Every one must hold the Scriptures to internal harmony with themselves, if they be regarded as the inspired word of God. And no wise and true man will deny the need of some plan by which harmony can be shown to exist, when he reflects that, on the one hand, as has been shown, the people actually did rule under the New Testament church constitution, while, on the other hand, numerous passages, besides those which treat of difference of spiritual gifts, with equal clearness put authority, in some sense, into the hands of church officials. We cannot go to the extreme which our first and extremely loose method implies, since that allows no room for special governments. Nor can we go to the opposite republican or monarchical extreme, since that takes the power from the people. Our second method furnishes the required harmony and thus meets the demands of an unyielding exegesis. And further than this, it is the only method which can meet the demands of the case, so far as we know. Our presumptive argument, therefore, amounts to well nigh demonstration.

§. *Tendencies of Churches.*

3. *The tendencies of the larger churches in our own time* confess the need of this method.

Small churches with a single pastor can get along very well, it may be, (though we do not wish to concede too much), without the leading senate in the plural. But in some form nearly all the larger churches secure it; it may be by elevating the deacons to the position, by the appointment of a special committee as the pastor's council and aid, or in some other way. This we say on the ground, not simply of personal acquaintance, but also of correspondence. Out of quite a number of letters received from leading Baptist pastors in the chief northern cities, all but one or two indicated the existence of something corresponding to the senate, and the one or two indicated nothing to the contrary. The simple fact is, that if a plural senate be wanting, a senate in the singular must exist in the pastor, which devolves upon him a responsibility and an amount of labor which in large churches no man wants to assume. As for either a large membership convening every week to attend to the preparatory or ordinary routine business of the church, or doing it well if they did so convene when one half does not know the other half, it is utterly preposterous. Important business must of necessity be worked up to a large extent by a few who can and will give it the necessary attention. Moreover the pastor of a large church will find it very desirable to augment his pastoral oversight as he can only do by associated helpers, being himself utterly unable to

meet in person all the wants of the case. For these and other reasons, the large churches naturally gravitate toward our second method by introducing something corresponding to a senate. Nor are the smaller ones entirely exempt from the tendency, as is evident from their customary resort to special committees in emergencies, those committees charged to do precisely what a senate of elders would do in the majority of cases, did such a senate exist. If, then, tendency or the expression of current feeling argue anything, it argues the need of a church senate by which to perfect our second method.

But these we present only as presumptive proofs. Positive evidence is not wanting, we think. Observe then:

§. *Board of Elders in Every Church.*

4. That, for some purpose, *it was the apostolic usage to have a board of elders in every church.*

The mother of all the churches, that of Jerusalem, born amid the glories and parturition throes of Pentecost, had its board, as we learn from Acts XI: 30, and elsewhere; the churches of "the twelve tribes scattered abroad" followed her example as well as current usage in the synagogues, with which, of course, they were familiar, as is evident from the language of James of Jerusalem addressed to them directing them, each and all, if any were sick among them to send for "the elders of *the church;*" the Gentile churches had them, as is evident from the general statement of Acts XIV: 23, that Paul and Barnabas, their chief found-

ers, "appointed for them elders in every church," and also from the fact that the churches of Ephesus and Thessalonica, and those established in the island of Crete, (*Acts* xx: 17; 1 *Thes.*, v : 12, *Titus* i : 5), in short, every church, so far as we have any information, possessed them. There is not a single indication in the New Testament of any church lacking this class of officers in the plural. Even in heaven, around the throne, the Revelator must have his four and twenty elders to make the scene home-like and complete. And long before either the New Testament or its churches came into being, substantially the same vision of heaven filled the eye of the Psalmist who conceived the eighty-ninth Psalm. (See verses 5–7, where, as rendered in the Septuagint, God is represented as "in the council," *boula*, the very term for senate or eldership, and surrounded by a praising and adoring "assembly," *ecclesia* or church). Dr. Harvey, professor of pastoral theology in the theological seminary at Hamilton, New York, says of plural eldership in the New Testament churches: "This is so plain, that it need only to be stated." Whether he is right, any one can determine by simply taking his concordance and referring to the uses of the term *elder*. Not an instance will he find of a church eldership in the singular. And then, if he will trace history from that day to this he will find that almost universally the churches have retained the plural. Even the New Hampshire Articles of Faith, which are quite generally adopted by the Baptists of the United States, at least at the north, retain the plural when of a gos-

pel church they say, "it's only scriptural officers are bishops or pastors and deacons." No man or church dare put *bishops* in the singular in such a statement. But more of modern usage bye and bye. For the present let us simply add, that in all our reading upon the subject we have seen but one attempt, and that a very feeble one, to deduce the singular from any scripture. That was a mere suggestion that Paul, in giving to Timothy the qualifications of a bishop, uses the singular as though possibly the office were sometimes found with but a single incumbent. But this surely proves nothing, for who would ever use the plural in such a case. And besides, the very church with which Timothy was at that time laboring had its plurality, as we know from Acts xx, where we have an account of Paul's sending for them on his last journey to Jerusalem and giving them a very urgent exhortation. The only thing which makes any one reluctant to admit this fact, we suppose, is the force of custom, which with ourselves is very sacred, however little we may reverence it among others.

§. *Force of Terms.*

5. *The terms descriptive, in a general way, of the functions of the eldership compel the adoption of our second method or throw us into confusion.*

The terms referred to are such as *overseers*, *pastors*, *presidents*, *leaders* and *governings*. (*See p.* 147). Not emphasizing now their special significations, it is manifest that they each and all put elders before the people as leaders. And this fact of itself necessitates

deliberation among themselves, inasmuch as they constitute a complex head and can only reach a mutual decision by deliberation. Moreover, if in matters of moment upon which the church is to pass, they act the part of leaders or overseers, they must hold the relation of a council to the body, for this is the only relation compatible with such offices. And thus the very terms by which they are defined present them to us as a *bona fide* senate in church deliberations, related to the church very much as the Senate of the United States is to the House of Representatives, differing, however, in that final authority vests in the church. Any inferences which conflict with these reduce these terms, so far as the relation of a united eldership to the church is concerned, to cyphers. They must go before the flock substantially as indicated or in no appropriate sense are they either overseers, pastors, presidents, leaders or governors.

Of course it does not follow from this, that a church eldership need to hold very frequent sessions, or that church assemblies need often to convene, for most churches, and especially those who are doing their work the best, have very little business which requires extended deliberation. Nor does it follow that all of the business a church may have to do need to take this course, for much of it could as well be done without any special counsel on the part of the eldership. A principle is what we are discussing, and there can be, we think, but one conclusion regarding it if the government of the church be held to be democratic. If we deny the principle, we must face Babel confu-

sion or admit that no definite form of church government is binding.

§. *Precedent.*

6. Of course we do not expect very much from the New Testament in the way of details upon the method of government we are advocating, since its governmental data are so limited as a whole, and it is accustomed to deal in general principles so much more than in details of their operation, and more especially still for the reason that a form of government which is in vogue is not the one for description. Nevertheless it does give us a few hints which favor the view we are presenting.

The prominence given to the eldership in church transactions favors it. Thus, when the brethren at Antioch, in a time of scarcity, determined to send relief to the poor saints of Judea, they sent it to the elders of the Jerusalem church. This being the first mention of an eldership in any Christian church, it speaks volumes. (*Acts* XI: 30).

Again, when the church at Antioch sent a delegation to Jerusalem concerning a matter which troubled them, "the apostles and elders" are specified as though their decision was of special consequence. And though it cannot be proved beyond question that deliberation proceeded in the manner we have indicated, yet circumstances most favor such a supposition. At least we are informed by Paul, who was one of the delegation, that before the general church meeting he had a private interview with "those of reputation," whether we may suppose he included the whole board of elders

or not. (*Gal.* II: 2). And in the address to the church at Antioch, "the apostles and elders and brethren" are specified in classes as though they were accustomed to act thus as doubtless they were. Moreover, while the final decision was by the whole church, the customary reference to it attributes it to "the apostles and elders." (*Acts* XVI: 4). Certainly they must have led. Indeed, though the whole church appear to have been assembled when the decision was taken, it is only said that "the apostles and the elders came together to consider the matter." (XV: 6).

On the occasion of Paul's last visit to Jerusalem, we have distinctly set forth a meeting of "James and all the elders" to counsel him as to his course in that critical emergency, which proves beyond a question that such meetings of this guiding senate were common. If any think it proves too much, we would simply remind him that it has already been shown, that in matters of moment ultimate authority vested in the assembly of the Jerusalem church and not in the eldership.

We think we may now safely say that our second method is established, and so the harmony we sought secured, while at the same time democracy as the polity of the New Testament church is vindicated. We wish however to add:

SECTION IV.—HISTORIC CONFIRMATION.

7. A little confirmation from history.

To any reader of the earliest post-apostolic writings, there is no room for doubt as to whether the churches

planted by the apostles and their immediate successors possessed the eldership or presbytery as a guiding senate. We will here take space to give but one or two citations, referring the readers for others to our treatment of the three-office theory and the ancient office of teacher, (*pp.* 188, 194,) and reminding him that *senate* and *eldership* or *presbytery* are convertible terms. A statement of Origen throws such a flood of light upon this and other points connected with the church constitution, that we cannot forbear to quote it entire. It shows how tenaciously the apostolic theory, as we are depicting it, held sway even as late as the beginning of the third century. Comparing the Christian ecclesia with the civil or free-city ecclesia, Origen says:

"But the God who sent Jesus dissipated all the conspiracies of the demons, and made the gospel of Jesus to prevail throughout the whole world for the converson and reformation of men, and caused churches (ecclesias) to be everywhere established in opposition to those of superstitious and licentious and wicked men; for such is the character of the multitudes who constitute the citizens in the assemblies (ecclesias) of the various cities (*τοιαῦτα γὰρ τὰ πανταχοῦ πολιτευόμενα ἐν ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις τῶν πόλεων πλήθη.*) Whereas the churches of God which are instructed by Christ, when carefully contrasted with the assemblies of the districts in which they are situated, are as beacons in the world; for who would not admit that even the inferior members of the *church*, and those who in comparison with the better are less worthy, are neverthe-

less more excellent than many of those who belong to the *assemblies* in the different districts? For the *church* of God, *e. g.*, which is at Athens, is a meek and stable body, as being one which desires to please God, who is over all things; whereas the *assembly* of the Athenians is given to sedition, and is not at all to be compared to the *church* of God in that city. And you may say the same thing of the *church* of God at Corinth, and of the *assembly* of the Corinthian people; and also of the *church* of God at Alexandria, and of the *assembly* of the people of Alexandria. And if he who hears this be a candid man, and one who investigates things with the desire to ascertain the truth, he will be filled with admiration of Him who not only conceived the design, but also was able to secure in all places the establishment of *churches* of God along side of the *assemblies* of the people in each city. In like manner, also, in comparing the *council* (*βουλὴν*, Senate) of the *church* of God with the *council* in any *city*, you would find that certain *councilors* (*βουλευταί*) of the *church* are worthy to rule in the city of God, if there be any such city in the whole world; whereas the *councilors* in all other places exhibit in their characters no quality worthy of the conventional superiority which they appear to enjoy over their fellow citizens. And so, too, you must compare the *ruler* of the church in each city with the *ruler* of the people of the city, in order to observe that even amongst those *councilors* and *rulers* of the *church* of God who come very far short of their duty, and who lead more indolent lives than others who are more energetic, it is nevertheless possible to dis-

cover a general superiority in what relates to the progress of virtue over the characters of the *councilors* and *rulers* in the various cities." (*Works II.*, 110).

The comparison needs no comment. Origen was manifestly conversant with the church government and organization we are advocating. He applies to the church the very terms (*εκκλησία* and *βουλή*) which named the assembly and senate of the Athenian and other like democracies. And we cannot for a moment suppose that his conception was the product of his own times or of any intermediate ones between him and the apostles, for there is no evidence that the form of church government had ever been a theme for discussion. Hence Rothe calls the whole period between the apostles and Cyprian of Carthage, "the period of abstract indefiniteness," in which "no exact definitions" of the church are given. Origen's conception of the church as here portrayed, was evidently the conception which had emenated from the apostles or, more accurately speaking, from the Holy Spirit who guided them. It is the conception, evidently, under which the Holy Seer of Patmos figured the heavenly assembly when he saw it with "the four and twenty elders" around the throne of God. And it is also the conception of the author of the eighty-ninth Psalm, already alluded to, as it appears in the Septuagint Verses 5–7, read as follows:

"And the heavens praise thy wonders, O Jehovah,
  Yea, Thy faithfulness in the *assembly* of the holy ones.
For who in the skies can be compared to Jehovah,
  Is like to Jehovah among the sons of the mighty;
A God greatly to be feared in the *council* of the holy ones,
  And terrible above all that are round about Him."

The terms for assembly and council are the same as those used by Origen and the Greek democracies and, therefore, compel us to conceive of the form of democracy we are advocating, for they virtually name it.

That we are not alone in our judgment of the earliest Christian usage, a quotation from Mosheim's Church History concerning the third century will show. He says: "It appears incontrovertible from the most authentic records and the best histories of this century, that, in the large cities, there was at the head of each church, a person to whom was given the title of *bishop* who ruled this sacred community with a certain sort of authority, in concert, however, with the body of presbyters, and consulting, in matters of moment, the opinions and the voices of the whole assembly." (*Third Cent., Pt., II. cp.*, II). If this was the usage as late as the third century while the tide was running so strongly in the direction of monarchy, it must have been well established in the earlier period.

If we follow the track of Protestant christendom from the period of the Waldenses to the present, we shall find that the idea of the senate or eldership has, in some form, possessed it well nigh universally. (*See Three-Office Theory, p.* 193).

Even the Baptists, who may now very generally suppose their history to be free from any connection with it, are no exception to our statement. Jones, the church historian, thinks "the impartial testimonies" adduced by himself, are more than sufficient to settle the question of family likeness or connection between them and the ancient Waldenses. He also quotes Limborch and

Mosheim as saying; the former: "To speak candidly what I think, of all the modern sects of Christians the Dutch Baptists most resemble both the Albigenses and the Waldenses;" the latter, referring to the Waldenses: "Before the rise of Luther and Calvin, there lay concealed in almost all the countries of Europe, persons who had adhered tenaciously to the principles of the modern Dutch Baptists." (*Ch. His.*, *II.*, 84). But these Waldenses, according to the best evidence we are able to obtain, while admitting "no other degrees than bishops and deacons" in the ministry, as Monsieur de Vignaux, "who was forty years pastor" of one of their churches affirms, practically, like the Presbyterians at this day, made two offices out of the first of these degrees, and so secured the customary number of three. Hence Mr. Waddington in his church history, as quoted by Punchard, says: "They maintained and imitated the divine institution of the three orders in the priesthood." Hence, too, Dr. Miller, in his "letters to Presbyterians," as quoted by the same, says: "They were anti-Episcopal, and substantially Presbyterian in their church government." That they had "a consistory or session in each congregation," appears to be admitted on all sides. (*Punchard's His. of Cong.*, *I.*, 165, 166).

Of the Mennonites or Dutch Baptists supposed to have sprung from them, Mosheim says: "Their ecclesiastical discipline seems to be almost entirely the same with that of the Presbyterians." The difference was probably the same, substantially, as that pointed out by Adam Blair, a Scotch Presbyterian, between

the Waldenses and the Presbyterians, and which leads him to say, "their government is more popular than our Presbyterianism and verges nearer to the Independents." (*Punchard's His. of Cong.*, *I.*, 166). They could not then have been far from the precise thing we are advocating, as were not the Independents with their four church offices, and the New England Congregationalists their successors. In other words, their church session or eldership stood related to the church itself more as a senate than does the Presbyterian.

Relics of this ancient Baptist use of the church senate may be found all along the path of history until the present time; sometimes in the form of a plural preaching as well as governing eldership, sometimes in that of ruling elders, and sometimes in a board of deacons or a standing committee. Speaking of the period of Baptist history between 1567 and 1688, A. D., Mr. Cramp says:

"There was a plurality of elders in many of the churches," He specifies the Bedford, Luton, Farringdon, St. Albans, Portsmouth, Bessel's Green, Ashford, Glazier's Hall, Dovenshire Square, and Mile End churches of London; also the churches of Norwalk, Hookertown, Bridgewater and Bristol. Then he adds: "In some churches there were ruling elders, sometimes called teachers, who preached when their services were required and presided at the church meetings in the absence of the pastor." (*His. of Bap's.* 385).

But to put the position of the Baptist fathers beyond all question, we will quote from their confessions

of faith. The confession of the Seven churches of London, issued in 1643, has the following articles:

"XXXVI: Being thus joined, every church hath power given them from Christ, for their well-being, to choose among themselves meet persons for elders and deacons, being qualified according to the Word, as those which Christ hath appointed in his Testament for the feeding, *governing*, serving and building up of his church."

"XLIV: Christ, for the keeping of this church in holy and orderly communion, placeth some special men over the church, who, by their office, are to *govern*, oversee, visit, watch." (*Cutting's Vindications, pp.* 122, 123).

The confession of 1689, "put forth by the elders and brethren of many congregations in London and the country," uses the following language:

"A particular church gathered and completely organized, according to the mind of Christ, consists of officers and members: and the officers appointed by Christ, to be chosen and set apart by the church (so called and gathered) for the peculiar administration of ordinances, and *execution of power*, or duty, which he entrusts them with, or calls them to, to be continued to the end of the world, are bishops or *elders* and deacons." According to the next article these officers are to be "chosen by the common suffrage of the church itself; and solemnly set apart by fasting and prayer, with the imposition of hands of the *eldership of the church* if there be any before constituted therein." (*Cutting's Vind. p.* 168).

The Philadelphia Baptist Association of this country, having adopted the confession of faith last named, in the year 1742 put forth a treatise concerning a true and orderly gospel church, in which they speak as follows concerning ruling elders:

"Ruling elders are such persons as are endued with gifts to assist the pastor or teacher in the government of the church; it was as a statute in Israel. The works of teaching and ruling both belong to the pastor; but in case he be unable, or the work of ruling too great for him, God hath provided such for his assistance, and they are called ruling elders, helps, *governments* or *he that ruleth.*" Then follows an account of their qualifications in which they say, "their office only relateth to rule and order, in the church of God, and doth not include teaching," although teaching of course they do not forbid. (*Cutting's Vind.*, *p.* 204).

There are Baptist churches still which have their plural or ruling elderships, though gradually, as among the Congregationalists, and for similar reasons, we suppose, such elderships have become well nigh extinct. The reasons we judge to be, first, that having attempted the illogical thing of deriving two or more offices from one in the New Testament, the people have failed to find clear scriptural support for a ruling eldership; second, they have in like manner failed to find support for the work usually assigned to them in distinction from that of the preaching or teaching elders; and, third, modern individualism and universal church ideas sweep like a mighty torrent against such an office in our independent churches. The very thing

which makes it most imperatively necessary renders it very difficult to sustain it in the usual form.

But whatever may have been the fate of a perverted eldership, it must be conceded by every impartial mind that some kind of a church senate is supported by very respectable human as well as by divine authority. With increased assurance, therefore, do we advocate it as divine, and especially so when we remember that the Confessions of Faith, from which we have quoted, were the products of times which tried men's souls and hence impelled them to do their best work.

Section V.—Conclusion.

We now dismiss the subject. If we have established our second method of conducting a democracy as the scriptural one, we have the required harmony between those passages of Scripture which vest church authority in the hands of the members and those which in some measure vest it in the hands of officers. On no other plan, so far as we are able to see, is a harmony possible. Harmony then we now triumphantly quote as a new evidence, that the democratic is the form of government given to the church by its divine and infallible Head.

We have, moreover, at the same time established the existence of an eldership or senate in the New Testament church and shall therefore be saved the labor of a separate treatise upon that subject. It will remain simply to show its functions, qualifications and relations, a matter to which we shall attend in a subsequent chapter.

CHAPTER III.

OFFICERS: APOSTLES, PROPHETS, TEACHERS.

THE subject of offices in the Christian church is involved in no less confusion than that of fundamental idea or government. Of course, Eph. IV: 11, and 1 Cor. XII: 28, which are the only formal schedules of offices given in the New Testament, are the chief guides of all interpreters or parties. But the manner of handling these and other texts bearing upon the subject is varied and curious.

SECTION I.—CURRENT SCHEMES REVIEWED.

Dr. Schaff's View.

Some, like Dr. Schaff in his History of the Apostolic Church, make a distinction between "church government" and "congregational government," and divide the offices of these schedules accordingly. The distinction is predicated upon the twofold idea of the church as universal and local. Following Rothe, Dr. Schaff remarks: "The wide view of the church as the total of believers, the whole kingdom of Christ on earth, is the original one; the narrower sense of the term in which it denotes a particular congregation, as the church of Corinth or of Rome, is the derived. Again: "The whole system of government has formed itself

from above downwards, and not the contrary." Adding *deacons* to the list of offices enumerated in the texts referred to, and understanding "pastors and teachers to be identical with one another and with those elsewhere commonly styled presbyters and even bishops, we have," he says, "five classes of offices: *apostles*, *prophets*, *evangelists*, *presbyter-bishops* (uniting the functions of teaching and governing), and *deacons*." Dividing these according to the distinction between church and congregational government, he makes "the first three to have reference to the whole church, while those of presbyter and deacon relate only to single congregations;" that is, apostles, prophets and evangelist are officers in the church universal, and presbyters and deacons only in the church local, misnamed congregation.

Having already shown that the church universal is a thing of the imagination purely, a metaphorical and not a real church, of course we cannot accept of this division of offices, since a metaphorical church can have no offices in fact. Moreover, did we grant the division to be consistent, the scheme of offices named would be unsatisfactory for the reason that one office, that of teacher, in 1 Cor. XII: 28 put in the third rank, and hence corresponding to evangelists in Eph. IV: 11 rather than to pastor-teachers or presbyter-bishops, is entirely ignored. It may be assumed to be the same as the fourth rank of the other schedule, but this is rather matter for proof than for assumption.

Episcopal Scheme.

Episcopacy, which is one of three great competitors in the matter of church organization, holds to three offices for the church: *bishops*, *presbyters* and *deacons*, making, as respects offices, no such distinction in the church as was made by Dr. Schaff. But these three are derived from two in the New Testament, *bishops* and *presbyters* being a division of what Dr. Schaff names *presbyter-bishops*. Whether this is philosophic or good exegesis, any one can judge. It is like making a distinction between the chairman of a committee and the remaining members, as though they were not head and trunk to the same body, but entirely different bodies. Surely, no one could claim that a modern bishop is the same officer as a modern rector or parish priest. Saying nothing, then, of apostles, prophets and evangelists, this scheme, like the former one, makes no account of teacher in the third rank of 1 Cor. XII: 28; while it makes two offices out of the fourth rank, in Eph, IV: 11.

Presbyterian Scheme.

The Presbyterian scheme, which is the second great competitor in the matter under consideration, and which has John Calvin as its father, reveals some equally curious facts. Calvin said: "Those who preside over the government of the church, according to the institution of Christ, are named by Paul, first, *apostles;* secondly, *prophets;* thirdly, *evangelists;* fourthly, *pastors;* and lastly, *teachers*, (*Eph.* IV: 11)."

"Of these, only the last two," he adds, "have an ordinary office in the church." (*Institutes, II.*, 318). Adding to this list his *seniors*, or *ruling elders* as they are now called, who composed the *church senate* and had government especially in charge, being "elected by the people to unite with the bishops (*pastors*) in pronouncing censure and exercising discipline;" adding also deacons who cared for the poor and the finances of the church somewhat generally, we have four offices for ordinary church service. Of these, the first, *pastors*, are the same as bishops, presbyters or elders, and have their qualifications and functions described in 1 Tim. III: 1 sq.; Tit. I: 5–9, and Acts XX; the second, *teachers*, differ from *pastors* in not presiding over "discipline, or the administration of the sacraments, or admonitions or exhortations, but the interpretation of Scripture only," and yet are embraced in the pastoral office, in some sense, so that subsequently he treats of church offices as being but three in number; the third, *seniors*, are d ived from the term *governments*, in 1 Cor. XII: 28, and the expression, "he that ruleth," in Rom. XII: 8.

Not adding other features to this scheme, it may be seen, that in it its author makes two offices out of the expression *pastors and teachers* in Eph. IV: 11, while the best modern expositors are agreed that it means but one, the presence of the definite article before the term *pastor* and its absence before *teacher* being, as they think, proof positive. It may be noticed again, however, that these two offices, as already suggested, are apparently and strangely reduced to one, leaving

us but three offices in the ordinary church. Next, his third office in the scheme of four, *seniors*, he derives from Rom. XII: 8, 1 Cor. XII: 28, as though it were entirely distinct from *pastors*, while the term *ruleth*, (*ὁ προϊστάμενος*) which is his main reliance, points directly to pastors, bishops, presbyters or elders, it being the very term which, in 1 Tim. III: 4, 5, and V: 17, indicates the presiding function of that class. And this, we judge, he substantially concedes, from the fact that *presbyters* in his three office scheme, appear to occupy the position of *seniors*. At all events modern Presbyterianism concedes it, for it derives its ruling elders directly from 1 Tim. III: 1 sq., and V: 17. (*Presbyterian Confession of Faith, on Ruling Elders.*) But this reduces three of his original four offices to one, substantially. Still further: neither Calvin, who so emphasizes order or rank in Eph. IV: 11, nor his successors in the advocacy of Presbyterianism, notice either the rank or the office of the teacher of 1 Cor. XII: 28, although the apostle there distinctly grades him by the term *thirdly*. Whether it is supposed that the third rank of the one schedule corresponds to the fourth of the other, or whether this office of *teacher* is entirely ignored, we cannot say, but assuredly something should be said upon so important a feature of the scriptural treatment of offices. Such are specimens of the confusion and want of logic which characterizes this great Master of Israel in his treatment of church offices.

Congregational Scheme

The Congregational scheme is the third great competitor, and is adopted by both the Congregationalists, so-called, and the Baptists. Like the others, however, its history presents a very mixed case. At the present time, both Baptists and Congregationalists generally admit of but two kinds of church offices as required, *jure divino*, (by divine right), viz: *pastors* and *deacons*. Pastors are the same as elders, presbyters or bishops, are of equal rank, and are usually found but singly in a church. Formerly, however, the case was quite different. A number of the earliest Baptist churches in England had a plural eldership, some of whom were ruling elders, and the churches of the oldest association in this country, the Philadelphia, had the same. The earliest Congregational churches had a still larger number of offices. The church in Frankfort, Germany, in 1557 put forth "a New Discipline," in which they provided for "*two ministers or teachers* of the Word," "*helpers* of the ministers in reading and expounding" Scripture, "*deacons* for keeping and distributing the treasure of the church," four in number, "*six seniors*," who, with the ministers of the Word, were to have "the execution of the discipline and government of the church," and "*four grave and honorable women*, either widows or wives," to care for the sick of the poor. The Cambridge platform, framed in 1648, recognizes five classes of officers:— *Pastors*, *teachers*, *ruling elders*, *deacons* and *deaconesses*. The manner in which it arrives at these five, like that of

the systems which have been previously noticed, is suggestive and interesting. It starts with the statement that the officers appointed by Christ "were extraordinary or ordinary:—extraordinary as *apostles*, *prophets*, *evangelists:* ordinary as *elders* and *deacons.*" It then divides the *elders* into *pastors*, *teachers* and *ruling elders*, making three offices out of one, according to the example set by good but illogical men gone before. The pastor's special work was "to attend to exhortation and therein to administer a word of wisdom;" the teacher's "to attend to doctrine and therein to administer a word of knowledge;" the ruling elders to attend to a variety of things which may be ranked under the head of ruling and governing, such as calling the assembly, presiding in church meetings, preparing business for the church, formally receiving those into the church whom the church received, and excommunicating those whom it excommunicated, ordaining officers chosen by the church, *et cet.* Teachers it accounted as truly church officers as pastors, and not one for the church and the other for the school, and derived them alike from Eph. IV: 11, and 1 Cor. XII: 28, thus making two offices out of one and utterly ignoring the difference of grade.

It is not strange that offices so derived should be somewhat temporary in duration. Accordingly we find that as early as 1648, when the Cambridge platform was adopted, there were persons in the churches who could not see any such officer as ruling elder "directed and appointed in the Word of God." And as early as 1702, Cotton Mather wrote: "Our churches

are *now* nearly destitute of such help in government." (*Punchard's View of Congregationalism, p.* 79). We also find that long before this the office of *teacher* was in a precarious situation for a similar reason. Dr. John Owen, whose work on the "True Nature of a Gospel Church and its Government" was published in 1689, represented the learned as differing widely in view, though himself taking substantially the same view as that of the Cambridge platform. He says, indeed, that "if there were originally a distinct office of teachers in the church, it was lost for many ages. But yet there was always a shadow or appearance of it retained, *first*, in the public catechists, and then in doctors or professors of theology in the schools belonging to any church," the latter originating in or about the year 1135, and employed in the schools of Bononia, Paris and Oxford. The loss of such an office in the local churches can be a matter of no wonder.

Such then is the historical and exegetical basis on which the schemes of church offices now extant, and competing with each other for supremacy, rest. Is it wonderful that there should still be felt the need of a *jure divino* scheme upon which the studious and devout mind can rest in peace? Is it not rather wonderful that instead of following, amid such confusion, the crooked exegetical paths of the past, some one has not long before this addressed himself to the subject *de novo* for the revealed scheme of God, putting these conflicting and changing schemes into the crucible for the separation of their dross from the gold?

We assert without the fear of logical contradiction, that no mind can make a straight path through the Word on either of these theories. All minds must tacitly dissent from the idea of deriving two and three offices from one in the Word, and no scholar can assent to the indiscriminate reference of texts to this or that office as convenience may suggest. The application of a text is often as important as its subject matter. If then, in presenting a new scheme of church offices, differing somewhat from any which has gone before, though agreeing in some respects, of course, with all, we should fail to give satisfaction, we shall have the consolation of being at least in good company, not unused to failure. But we shall try to shun, at least, some of the more important errors into which they have fallen. Let us then, cautiously and prayerfully proceed.

Section II.—Extraordinary Officers.

It should be borne steadily in mind that the only church to which Christ has given offices is the local, there being no literal and organized universal or invisible church. There are not, then, extraordinary and ordinary officers in the sense of some for the one church and some for the other. Nor are there in the apostolical-succession sense, in which one office as well as one officer succeeds to another and thus perpetuates it, as, for example, a presbyter with the name bishop succeeding to an apostle and absorbing in himself both office and functions of office, and hence causing the number of church offices extant to be diminished. The terms *ordinary* and *extraordinary*, if used, must

have other interpretations. The church of Christ, multiplied indefinitely like the stars of heaven, and spread over untold centuries, is an extraordinary as well as an ordinary institution, and may well, therefore, have connected with its history some offices or officers who, in some senses, are extraordinary as well others who are ordinary. This is true, indeed, of less important organizations. A committee on constitution and numerous preliminary meetings for deliberation upon their report, may all be necessary to the inauguration of a new enterprise, though wholly or only in effect necessary when the enterprise has been fully organized and launched, and forming really no part of its subsequent working scheme, and hence needing no literal or official perpetuation in successors. Some such distinction, we understand to exist between the four offices or classes of officers given in the inspired schedules already noticed. Apostles and prophets (we do not add evangelists as do some) had work to do in laying the foundations of the church institution, or in giving its constitution and youthful training, which once done, needed no repetition. Addressing the Ephesian church, Paul distintly states that they are "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone." (*Eph.* II: 20). As Jesus himself, then, was an extraordinary officer and needed no official successor, so were apostles and prophets. And yet Jesus and apostles and prophets, in some senses, are as much needed in the churches to-day as ever. In these senses, however, we are happy to say they exist in the churches. With

these considerations as guides, we may now, in few words, dispose of the offices of apostles and prophets so far as our present needs in this discussion are concerned.

(*a.*) *Apostles.*

Apostles were appointed immediately by Christ, the head of the church, (*Gal.* I: 1; *Luke* VI: 12, 13; *John* VI: 70), and were in the highest sense his vicegerents, having received a special qualification by the Holy Spirit, (*John* XX: 22 *sq.*; *Acts* I: 2 *sq.*; and being, next to him, the foundation doctrinally and organically upon which the church is built, (*Matt.* XVI: 18; XVIII: 18; 1 *Cor.* III: 10; *Eph.* II: 20; 1 *Cor.* XII: 28). Aside from a special endowment of the Holy Spirit, their distinguishing peculiarity was, that they had been personally associated with the Lord Jesus, and were, therefore, not only especially instructed by Him, but were witnesses of His resurrection, (*Acts* 1: 22; 1 *Cor.* IX: 1). In this, personal successors were impossible. Nor did the apostles need them, since having once constituted the church or laid its foundation and embalmed their work in the imperishable Word, their labors needed no repetition. Hence they stand to-day and ever, as at the first, the incumbents in the apostolic office, the everlasting guides of the churches. Successors to them, like successors to their ascended Lord, are, to use no stronger terms, simply impossible.

(*b.*) *Prophets.*

Dr. Schaff defines prophets as "inspired teachers and enthusiastic preachers of the divine mysteries." (*Hist. Apos. Ch.*, 518). Evidently they were inspirational rather than logical, and met certain wants in the churches which are now met by the recorded teachings of the apostles, and the perpetuated, though unnamed fruits of their own revelations. They were not exclusively, nor perhaps even mainly foretellers of future events, this never being more than a single phase of the prophetic office, and the word itself meaning, *Speaking for one* rather than *speaking beforehand*, (*Smith's Bible Dictionary* on the word *prophet*). They would seem to have acted to some extent as guides in filling church offices or in indicating the character of individual gifts and adaptations, (*Acts* XIII: 1, and 1 *Tim.* I: 18; IV: 14, *cf.*, *Acts* XVI: 2). They also filled a very important place in the ordinary meetings for worship, (1 *Cor.* XIV: 5).

It is commonly said that the gift and office have ceased (*Dagg's Church Order*, 247), but this we think not strictly true. Doubtless living incumbents of the office or the office visible has ceased, as has that of the apostles, but not the gift as defined in 1 Cor. XIV: 3:—"He that prophesies, to men he speaks edification and exhortation and comfort." In this regard the prophetic aspiration of Moses—"would God that all the Lord's people were prophets,"—has been nearly fulfilled. Possibly the foretelling phase of the gift may have been abated, (though we would not concede too

much even here), but the gift has been rather merged in the disciples than removed, as the definition just quoted would suggest.

Section III.—Ordinary Officers.

Disposing thus of two of the offices in the inspired schedules, we turn our attention next to those which demand a more prolonged consideration. And that we may see the matter more clearly, we will now introduce the schedules themselves in the text of the Word: 1 Cor. xii: 28. "And God set some in the church, apostles first, secondly prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healing, helps, governings, diversities of tongues." Eph. iv: 11—'And he gave some as apostles, some as prophets, some as evangelists, some as pastors and teachers."

With reference to the first of these texts, it will be observed that an order of offices, as well as the offices, is given as far as to thirdly, but that after that the order ceases and, instead of offices, gifts or functions are named. We are now concerned with the offices and their order, leaving the gifts or functions to find their natural place, if they have one, in existing offices or in the unofficial disciples. In the second scheme, it will be observed, that offices or officers are named and they alone, and that an order similar to the first is observed though not formally named. That the order as well as the offices is important, no one, we think, could reasonably deny. Indeed it has been substantially observed in all the schemes of church offices

with which we are acquainted. Observing the order, then, the two schedules will stand as follows:

1, apostles; 2, prophets; 3, teachers; 4, gifts hinting office.

1, apostles; 2, prophets; 3, evangelists; 4, pastor-teachers.

Dropping from these lists those offices already considered, and re-numbering the balance according to the scheme of offices with living incumbents left for the churches to fill, as well as adding the office of *deacon* elsewhere clearly recognized as a church office, (*Phil.* I: 1; 1 *Tim.* III: 8), our schedules will stand thus:

1, teachers; 2, pastor-teachers, (hinted by "governings"), 3 deacons.

1, evangelists; 2, pastor-teachers; 3, deacons.

Here we have three offices and the schedules corresponding except in the first. In the first we have teachers in the one and evangelists in the other, in other words, teachers and evangelists appear to be put in the same place. If we might write the two as if the words were descriptive of different phases of the same office, as in the case of *pastors and teachers*, all would be clear and easy. May we do so? Our answer is, yes, this is just what we propose to do. Thus writing, then, the scheme will read:

1, evangelist-teachers, or, (the word *evangelist* exchanged for its popular synonym *preacher*,) preaching-teachers; 2, pastor-teachers; 3, deacons.

If again, for brevity's sake, we take the more comprehensive or significant of the terms *evangelist* or *preacher* and *teacher*, and substitute for pastor-teachers

what everybody is agreed is a scriptural designation of the same office, viz: bishop, overseer, presbyter, or elder, our scheme may stand thus:

1, teachers; 2, presbyters or elders; 3, deacons.

This scheme we propose to advocate, premising that while the Scriptures are fertile in names, and hence not strenuous which we adopt, they go upon the principle evidently that the greater office in some senses includes the less, but not the less the greater. We should also premise that while this three-office theory is scriptural, the first of these offices was, as a matter of fact, wanting in some of the churches planted by the apostles, at least in their earlier history, and hence we must concede a two-office theory for such churches as are not able to have the three.

DERIVATION OF OFFICES.

SCHEDULE TEXTS.

1. And God set some in the church, APOSTLES first, secondly PROPHETS, thirdly TEACHERS, after that (not offices but gifts, their basis in some instances,) miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, *governings*, (pastor-teachers or elders,) diversities of tongues. 1 Cor. XII: 28.
2. And he gave some as APOSTLES, some as PROPHETS, some as EVANGELISTS, some as PASTORS AND TEACHERS. Eph. IV: 11.
3. With the BISHOPS (elders or pastor-teachers) and DEACONS. Phil. I: 1.

1 AND 2 EPITOMIZED.

FORM I.

I. Apostles. II. Prophets. III. Teachers. IV. Governings (Pastor-Teachers.)
I. " II. " III. Evangelists. IV. Pastor-Teachers.

FORM II.

Apostles and Prophets dropped. Deacons added.

I. Teachers. II. Pastor-Teachers (governings). III. Deacons.
I. Evangelists. II. " " III. "

COMBINED.

FORM I.

I. Evangelist-Teachers (Preaching Teachers). II. Pastor-Teachers. III. Deacons.

FORM II.

I. Teachers II. Presbyters or Elders. III. Deacons.

Section IV.—Three-Office Theory.

As to the number of offices in the churches after, as well as in the times of the apostles, there can be no reasonable doubt in the mind of the diligent student of history. There certainly were three in the Jerusalem church, if it had deacons, when James, the apostle, was at its head, supported by the board of elders referred to in Acts xv and xxi. There certainly were also in the Ephesian church, when Timothy or John, the apostle, was at its head with the boards of elders and deacons referred to in 1 Tim. iii, and Acts xx; and that there were three in the churches immediately following the times of the apostles, it would be needless to quote from the earliest post-apostolic writers for any one who had read their writings. The three almost everywhere appear. Let a few sample quotations suffice, prefacing them with the remark, that it is not necessary in this matter to question the genuineness of writings, since those which may be thought to be spurious are at least of a very early date, and are testimony as to the opinions of their authors whoever they may have been.

Polycarp, "instructed by the apostles," (Ireneus, his disciple, *Adv. Haer. III:* 3), and called "the teacher of Asia" by the infuriated throng who clamored for his death, introduces his epistle to the Philippians thus: "Polycarp and the presbyters with him;" and in the course of that epistle counsels both presbyters and deacons in that church. Here then are, the teacher, presbyters and deacons, (*Apos., Fathers, Clark's Ed., pp.* 90, 69, 72).

Clement, of Rome, supposed to have been the same who is referred to in Phil. IV: 3, and who, in behalf of the church of Rome, addressed an epistle to the distracted church of Corinth, speaks of the apostles sent forth by Christ as having "appointed the first fruits of their labors, having first proved them by the Spirit, to be bishops and deacons of those who should afterward believe," (*chap.* 42). This reference is sometimes made in the interest of the common two-office theory, but it should be borne in mind that, while an apostle was with a church, he himself was the third and highest officer, and that, when he departed, it was customary for another to take his place as Clement himself is reputed to have done at Rome. If the Clementine Homilies and Recognitions are any authority, or the Epistle of Clement to James, no one could well lay more decided stress upon this than Clement himself. The epistle begins:

"Clement to James, the lord," (the Lord's brother supposed to be meant,) "and the bishop of bishops, who rules Jerusalem, the holy church of the Hebrews, and the churches everywhere excellently founded by the providence of God, with the elders and deacons, and the rest of the brethren, peace be always."

In narrating the proceedings of the Apostle Peter as he went from place to place, he represents him as appointing these officers commonly when he established churches. He represents him, indeed, as saying:

"It is necessary, therefore, that the church, as a city built upon a hill, have an order approved of God, and good government. In particular, let the bishop,

as chief, be heard in the things which he speaks; and let the elders give heed that the things ordered be done. Let the deacons, going about, look after the bodies and souls of the brethren, and report to the bishop." (*Homily, III., chap.* 67).

In harmony with these tripple appointments by Peter is the record in the "Syriac Documents," and the account in the Apocryphal New Testament of the doings of the apostle Thaddeus in Edessa, Messopotamia, (supposed to be the old Ur of the Chaldees,) and adjacent places, and of Thomas and Bartholomew in India. Just previous to his fatal illness, Thaddeus is said to have "called for Aggeus before the whole assembly of the church, and bade him draw near, and made him guide and ruler in his stead. And Palut, who was a deacon, he made elder, and Abshelama, who was a scribe, he made deacon." (*The Teachings of Addeus the Apostle, Syriac Docs., p.* 29). In the "Acts of Sharbil," a priest of idols in Edessa, who was converted to Christianity and became a martyr, we have this record:

"Barsamya, the bishop of the Christians, went up to Sharbil, he and Tiridath the elder, and Shalula the deacon. (*Syr. Docs., p.* 57).

In the Apocryphal writings, the "Acts of the Holy Apostle Thaddeus," we read:

"And Thaddeus along with Abgarus (King Abgar) destroyed idol temples and built churches; ordained as bishop one of his disciples, and presbyters and deacons." (*p.* 441).

In the same Apocryphal writings, in the "Martyrdom of the Holy and Glorious Apostle Bartholomew," we read of his appointment of King Polymius as bishop, and of the presbyters ordained by him baptizing the people, (*p.* 439); also, in the "consummation of Thomas the Apostle," of that apostle making one Syphorus a presbyter and one Juzanius a deacon. (*p.* 428). Not to quote farther in this direction, and making all the allowance any one pleases for the apocryphal in these early writings, the testimony still remains wholly in favor of three offices in those eastern churches.

Turning westward again and looking into "The Martyrdom of Ignatius," "the disciple of John, the apostle," who "governed the church of the Antiochians with great care," we find this record concerning "the cities and churches of Asia," by which he has to pass on his way as a martyr to Rome,—that they "welcomed the holy man through their bishops, and presbyters, and deacons, all hastening to meet him, if by any means they might receive from him some spiritual gift." (*The Apostolic Fathers*, *p.* 294). The many epistles of Ignatius, whether spurious or genuine, give us uniformly the same three offices. Almost any number of quotations might be adduced, but it were a waste of space and time. Suffice a single reference to the epistle to the Ephesians, in which he speaks of Onesimus as "a man of inexpressible love, and your bishop in the flesh;" of Burrhus as "your deacon in regard to God, and blessed in all things;" and of their being "subject to the bishop and presbytery," that "in all respects," they may "be sanctified" (*Ib. pp.* 147, 148). The

pastor of Hermas also mentions the three repeatedly. (*Ib. pp.* 336, 426, 427, &c.) There may be a question as to the entire classification, but of the three there can be no doubt.

The so-called Apostolical Constitutions, which were of an early though doubtful origin, use the following language: "For these, (the bishops,) are your high priests, as the presbyters are your priests, and your present deacons instead of your Levites." They also prescribe repeatedly and quite minutely their rights and functions. (*Book II.*, XXV. *sq.*)

Hippolytus, who lived in the latter part of the second and the first part of the third century, was familiar with the same three offices. Speaking of Callistus, a heresiarch who made much trouble in the church of Rome in the time of Victor and Zephyrinus, he says: "About the time of this man, bishops, priests and deacons who had been twice married, and thrice married, began to be allowed to retain their place among the clergy." (*Works. Vol. I.*, 343).

The "Heads of the Canons of Abulides or Hippolytus," "which are used by the Ethiopian churches," also give us the three offices as current among them. Among them are the following:

2. Of bishops.
4. Of the ordination of presbyters.
5. Of the ordination of deacons.

Tertullian, of Carthage, who flourished about the the same time, uses the following language: "But when persons in authority themselves—I mean the very deacons and presbyters, and bishops—take to

flight, how will a layman be able to see with what view it was said, Flee from city to city?" (*Works, Vol. I.*, 370). From a variety of sources, it is easy to determine that these offices were found in the church of Carthage. They were also found at Alexandria, as indicated by the canons of that church found in Hippolytus, (*Vol. II., p.* 138), of which canon second treats "of bishops," canon fourth "of the ordination of a presbyter," and canon fifth "of the constituting of a deacon."

Epiphanius, of the fourth century, is quoted by Watson in his Theological Institutes (*Part* 4, *chap.* 1) as saying: "That the apostles were not able to settle all things at once. But according to the number of believers and the qualifications for the different offices which those whom they found appeared to possess, they appointed in some places only a bishop and deacons; in others, presbyters and deacons; in others, a bishop, presbyters and deacons."

Of the Waldenses, Mosheim says: "The Government of the church was committed, by the Waldenses, to bishops, presbyters and deacons; for they acknowledged that these three orders were instituted by Christ himself." (*Int. His. of the Ch. Pt. II., V.* 13).

Adding now the general drift of ideas as seen in the three great systems of church government reviewed, as well as in the irrepressible tendency of those churches in our own time which avow the two-office theory to reproduce an eldership in the form of special committees composed of deacons or lay members, the evidence is overwhelming that whatever may be said

exegetically, the three-office theory has ruled and still rules the Christian world. But what is especially pertinent, it began to rule from the time of the apostles, as is attested by the undivided testimony of the earliest post-apostolic Christian writings. The presumption, then, is very strong that the three-office theory is of apostolic origin. And this presumption is greatly strengthened when we remember that, in those early times, apostolic tradition was almost, if not quite, equivalent to a "thus saith the Lord," and was hence very carefully guarded. Granting then, as we do, that the terms *bishop* and *presbyter* were originally identical in their application, we deny that the offices which they subsequently covered were either identical or unscriptural. Denying moreover, as we do, upon both historical grounds and the proper sense of the term *church*, that the office of bishop was diocesan in its character, as it now is, we likewise deny the right to go to the opposite extreme and sink it in that of presbyter or elder. Our claim is that the office which very early came to be covered by the term *bishop* in its restricted application to the pastorate of a local church, is the same as in the apostolic schedules is covered by the terms *evangelist* and *teacher*, and which for brevity's sake we call *the office of teacher*.

Section V.—The Teacher:—one with Evangelist and Early Bishop.

We are now to see whether we can make good that assumption, and thus redeem the third office in the

original schedules from the obscurity in which it has so long been involved.

The term Teacher precedes the term Bishop.

Notice then, in the first place, that the term *teacher*, or some equivalent, was very commonly applied to this office by the earliest writers, while the term *bishop* acquired the supremacy only by degrees. Dr. John Owen must have been prepossessed with an overshadowing idea when, in the early Christian writings, he saw "the shadow or appearance of the teacher's office in the public catechists," and afterward in "doctors or professors of theology." The term *teacher* has always had a somewhat wide range of application, both official and unofficial, as it has now. It has it in the Scriptures in the very terms with which we are dealing—*evangelist-teachers* and *pastor-teachers*—but it had also its technical official application, as when the Saviour is commonly called "The Teacher," and Paul denominates himself "a preacher, an apostle and a teacher. (2 *Tim.* 1: 11)." But its customary application in the earliest Christian writings was not to catechists or theological professors, but to bishops or presbyters. Thus Polycarp, popularly called bishop of Smyrna, in the very epistle of the church of Smyrna which narrates the circumstances of his martyrdom, is called, in the language of the heathen, "the teacher of Asia," and in that of the church, "an apostolic and prophetic teacher and bishop of the catholic church which is in Smyrna," and again, "an illustrious teacher, (*Apos. Fath's pp.* 90, 92, 94). In the epistle

of Clement to James, Peter is represented as installing Clement, his successor at Rome, in "the chair of the teacher," (*chap.* XIX). Rufinus, of the fourth century, commenting upon this transaction, in his introduction to the Recognitions of Clement, uses the same terminology, saying: "For some ask, since Linus and Cletus were bishops in the city of Rome before this Clement, how could Clement himself, writing to James, say the chair of teaching was handed over to him by Peter?" Proceeding then to answer the question, the author of the epistle of Barnabas recognizes the office of the teacher by repeatedly disclaiming that he writes as the teacher of those he addresses. (*Chaps. I., IV.*). Hippolytus, in discoursing against the heretics Beron and Helix, uses precisely the same classification of offices as that of 1 Cor. XII: 28, saying: "For in the view of apostles, and prophets, and teachers, the mystery of the divine incarnation has been distinguished as having two points of contemplation natural to it," &c. Whoever may have been the author of the beautiful "Epistle to Diognetus," whether Justin Martyr, Clement of Rome, Apollos, or some other person, when he says: "Having been a disciple of the apostles, I am become a teacher of the Gentiles. I minister the things delivered to me to those that are disciples worthy of the truth," he evidently alludes to something different from a catechetical teacher; he means a teacher in the sense of a bishop or presbyter. If Justin Martyr was its author, this inference may gather a little additional force from his manner of ex pressing himself concerning the administration of bap-

tism. "But we," he says, "after we have thus washed him who has been convinced and has assented to our teaching, bring him to the place where those who are called brethren are assembled." (*Jus. Mar. p.* 63). If Clement was the author we need no additional light, for he was bishop at Rome; if Apollos, tradition makes him to have been bishop of Caesarea.

Whatever historic value may be attached to the Syraic Documents acquired by the British Museum from the Nitrian Monastery of Lower Egypt, they at least make it quite evident that the title *bishop* was not the original designation of the highest church officer in the East. Indeed, the first mention of that title is in the "Acts of Sharbil," who was martyred A. D. 115, more than half a century, at least, after the gospel was introduced into Mesopotamia, and it may then have been transferred into the Syriac from the Greek, as this work bears some marks of a Greek original. (*Documents, p.* 56[n]). The common and earliest designation of the highest church officer is *Ruler and Guide*, or simply *Guide*. In the so-called "Teaching of the Apostles" we read: "And after the death of the apostles, there were Guides and Rulers in the churches," *p.* 45); also: "The apostles further appointed . . . an overseer (not the equivalent of ἐπίσκοπος but of σκοπός), who shall likewise be the Guide of all the people" (40); also: "That it shall not be permitted to the Guide to transact the matters which pertain to the church apart from those who minister with him" (41); also: "Let there be a Ruler over the elders who are in the villages, and let him be recognized as head of

them all" (42), *et cet.* We are further told where a number of the apostles and evangelists acted as Rulers and Guides inducting others into office after them. But the leading functions of all, as indicated by the terms used, were preaching and teaching. The quotation first made from the "Teaching of the Apostles," continued: "and whatsoever the apostles had committed to them and they had received from them, they continued *to teach* to the multitude through the whole space of their lives." The document itself claims apostolic origin, and that its ordinances and laws, given by inspiration, were "in accordance with the gospel of their preaching, and with the true and faithful doctrine of their teaching." (38). Another of these Syriac documents is styled "The teaching of Addeus (Thaddeus) the apostle," and in it we read, "the whole city (Edessa) rejoiced in his teaching;" "to those also who shall be associated with thee (Thaddeus) as teacher of this gospel, I (King Abgar) am prepared to give large donations." Another of these documents is styled "The Teaching of Simon Cephas in the city of Rome." In this we are told that "there was great rejoicing at his teaching," that "he served there in the rank of Superintendence of Rulers twenty-five years," that just prior to his death he called Ansus the deacon" (supposed to have been Linus), and made him bishop in his stead in Rome," and that he charged him "to teach before the people," (*pp.* 54, 55). Sharbil, the priest of idols before alluded to, when on trial as a confessor of Jesus, said to his judge: "Thou hast well done in treating me thus;

because I have heard that one of the teachers of the church hath said, Scars are on my body that I may come to the resurrection from the place of the dead." (74). His reference was undoubtedly to a former Ruler and Guide; certainly not to a catechist or theological professor, because there is no reference to either in these documents, we believe. Persecution at length falling upon Barsamya, the bishop or Guide through whose influence Sharbil had been converted, he was arrested, and while standing before the door of the judgment hall, the Sharirs of the city represented to the judge that the disciples, many of them "honorable chief persons of the city," were standing there with him, crying; "We will all die with Barsamya who is our teacher and guide." (82). Having entered the hall the judge said to Barsamya: "Art thou Barsamya who hast been made Ruler and Guide to the people of the Christians?" Having been at length released from custody by an order from the Roman Emperors, the multitude of Christians thronged him, saying among other things: "We have heard from thee that a teacher of the church has said, The will, according to what it is, so is it accepted." One of the successors of the Apostle Thaddeus in the chair of Ruler and Guide was Aggeus, who incurred the wrath of one of the sons of King Abgar, in consequence of which he was slain while expounding the Word of God in church, (32, 34). Narrating the event, Moses of Chorene said: "The soldier went, and, seeing the holy man seated in the chair of the teacher, cut off his legs with his sword, and immediately the saint gave

up the ghost." Mar Jacob, bishop of Sarug or Batnæ. A. D. 519–521, was an extensive Syraic writer, and in one or two of the headings of his homilies or canticles appears as "the teacher," indicating the prevalence and application of the term in his day. (129, 135) According to the Syriac version of the Apostolic Constitutions called "Ordinances and Laws," and already referred to as the "Teachings of the Apostles," the question arose among them, after they had received these constitutions on the day of Pentecost, "How they should preach His (Christ's) gospel in the world?" The question was answered by the gift of tongues, and each apostle going to that country in which the tongue he had received was spoken, and thus, to quote the language of the document, "did the teaching of His preaching begin to have authority in the world." (37). Concerning those who should succeed them as Rulers and Guides in the churches founded by them, they ordained: "Whosoever is unacquainted with the faith of the church and the ordinances and laws appointed in it, let him not be a Guide and Ruler." (40). Concerning their work in the "various countries" which received the teachings" of the apostles, the record says: "The Guides disputing with the Jews from the books of the prophets, and contending also against the deluded pagans with the terrible mighty works which they did in the name of Christ, *et cet.*" (46). Such, then, was the manner in which "the "teaching of the preaching" was furthered by the Guides. As to the character of their work, no essential difference appears in the Syriac and the more extensive Greek forms of

the Constitutions in which the word *bishop* is used to designate the same office. The bishop (ἐπίσκοπος) and the overseer (σκοπός) or Ruler and Guide are alike the chief teacher of the church, while the presbyters or elders are subordinate teachers.

Evangelist not a Distinct Church Officer in the Early Writings.

Notice now, in the second place, that the term *evangelist* is of rare occurrence in these early Christian writings and indicates no church office distinct from others.

It is a remarkable fact that neither of the forms of the Apostolic Constitutions, from which we have quoted, and neither of the heads of canons, recognize the office of the evangelist in any way whatever. In fact there is no recognition of it in any of the Ante-Nicene writings, so far as we can ascertain. The term occurs a few times and but a few, and then almost invariably represents the writers of the gospels. Clearly the office, as a distinct one, separated from others, was not known in the earliest post-apostolic churches. The work of evangelizing is ascribed to Christ, (*Tertullian against Marcion*, 222); to apostles, (*Apoc. Gos., Acts and Rev.* 443); to the writers of the gospels, and to others, but the office seems to be unknown as a distinct one. What inference then shall we draw from such facts? One inference is, that while the work of the evangelist was variously performed, the office-title yielded to the more comprehensive one of *teacher*, *ruler and guide*, or *bishop*, (and sometimes,

possibly, *presbyter*), the office-title of him who, in the most emphatic sense, next to Christ, the inspired authors of the gospels and the apostles, performed the the work. And this is confirmed by a variety of considerations: 1, While the term *evangelist* occurs but three times in the New Testament, and in those three occurrences designates only two men distinctly as evangelists,—Philip and Timothy,—the character and work of these men, so far as known, and of others who are presumed to have been evangelists, such as Titus, Silas or Silvanus, John Mark, Clement, Epaphras and Epaphroditus, lead commentators and ecclesiologists to make them something more than simply "itinerant missionaries,"—to make them apostolic vicars, men commissioned by apostles, and, for the time being, endowed with their authority; hence, first in church authority after themselves. Thus Dr. Schaff says: "In short, they were, in some sense, the vicegerents of the apostles, acting under their direction and by their authority, like the commissioners of a king." Calvin says: "By *evangelists* I mean those who, while inferior in rank to the apostles, were next them in office and even acted as their substitutes." (*Institutes, II.*, 319). 2, If tradition may be relied upon, most of these men became bishops or teachers in the churches. Dr. Wm. Smith, in his Bible Dictionary, (*vide Art. Church*,) says: "In the next century (the 2d) we find that those officers have the name of bishops, while those in the first century who were called indifferently presbyters or bishops had now only the title of presbyters. We conclude, therefore, that the title *bishop* was gradually

dropped by the second order of the ministry and applied specifically to those who represented what James, Timothy and Titus had been in the apostolic age." This accords with the traditionary records which make Timothy, bishop of Ephesus; Silas, bishop of Corinth; Titus, bishop of Crete; Mark, the evangelist, bishop of Alexandria; Mark, also called John, bishop of Bibloupolis; Epaphroditus, bishop of Andriace, *et cet* It accords, moreover, with Origen's statements in reply to the charge of Celsus, that the Christians were not desirous that all men should become Christians. "Some of them," said he, "have made it their business *to itinerate*, not only through cities but also through villages and country houses, that they might make converts to God." And then, while admitting that in his own time when so many "rich men, persons of rank, and delicate high-born ladies" were receiving "*the teachers* of Christianity," it might seem to be for "a little glory that certain individuals assume *the office of Christian instructors*," he claims that such an inference could not rationally have been entertained with respect to Christianity in its beginnings, when the danger incurred, especially by *its teachers*, was great." (*Origen, II.*, 92). His itinerates, then, are the teachers of Christianity, or they who are in the office of Christian instructors,—more nearly correspondent to our pastors or teachers than to our evangelists. 3, The troublesome, and as yet unreduced confusion which exists in the public mind with reference to evangelists, is best disposed of by the supposition we have made. The term *evangelist* indicates, etymologically, one who

propagates the gospel, without specification of manner. The historical use of the term indicates a variety in manner, and hence the existing confusion referred to. The four evangelists, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, propagated it by their writings. Timothy and others of his class, denominated sometimes apostolic vicars and sometimes itinerant missionaries, propagated it by making disciples, organizing them into churches, and then superintending or guiding their movements by appropriate teaching,—very much like our modern missionaries. But modern evangelists, as a general rule, simply assist pastors of churches in protracted meetings, paying no attention to fields where the gospel has never been published, and none to the after-training of the churches assisted. If we were to emphasize the etymological sense of the word far enough, we might add to the list colporteurs, lay preachers, Sabbath-school teachers, editors of religious journals, and we know not how many more kinds of laborers in the gospel. But this would evidently take all technical signification, such as is indicated in our schedule of offices, away from the word. Indeed, we may say the confusion of ideas involved in the definitions already given does very nearly, if not quite the same thing, forcing upon us the question, "What does the term cover as an office-title?" Now, it seems to us that no one could say that it covers exclusively the first signification noticed, that of the four writers of the gospels, because other persons like Timothy are called evangelists by the very author of the office-schedule under consideration, and were acting in that capacity

under his personal direction as an apostle. Nor could any one with any more propriety say it covered exclusively the modern and exceedingly loose view of the office, if we may call that an office which is under no church appointment or control. It finds too little likeness in anything official in the Scriptures. For an official signification then, we must fall back upon that idea already indicated which contains the more substantial and Scriptural features of both the rank and the work of those who bear the title, and make the evangelist the teacher.

Analysis of the Terms Teacher and Evangelist.

Having now seen that the historical indications favor the union of the titles *evangelist* and *teacher* in the same officer, we will turn our attention, thirdly, to a clearer analysis of the terms for their suggestions.

(*a.*) *Contrast in Literature.*

There is a contrast and yet a marked correspondence between them. The contrast runs all through ancient and modern literature, and, by substituting the term *preacher* and its cognates for evangelist and its cognates, may be easily seen. It appears in one of the weekly religious papers which lies before me as I write. The young men of a Bible class could not be retained in the class to listen to "a would-be-teacher whose method of instruction was sermonizing." "They expected to study but were compelled to listen. They looked for a teacher but found a preacher." It appears

in a quotation from the Syriac version of the Apostolical Constitutions, already quoted in part: "And by the same gift of the Spirit which was given to them on that day, they, (the apostles), appointed ordinances and laws, such as were in accordance with the gospel of their preaching and with the true and faithful doctrine of their teaching." It runs all through the New Testament. Take the following specimens: "And it came to pass when Jesus had made an end of commanding his twelve disciples, that he departed thence to teach and to preach in their cities." (*Matt.* XI: 1). "And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the good news of the kingdom." (IX: 35). "And it came to pass on one of the days, as he was teaching the people in the temple and publishing (preaching) the good news," &c. (*Luke* XX: 1). "And every day in the temple and from house to house they ceased not to teach, and to publish (preach) the glad tidings of Jesus the Christ." (*Acts* V: 42). "Paul also and Barnabas continued in Antioch, teaching and publishing (preaching) the glad tidings of the word of the Lord, with many others also." (XV: 35). The Saviour is sometimes said to preach, but more commonly to teach. His common appellation is Teacher, (Master in common version). Paul distinguishes between the terms by twice appropriating both to himself, thus: "For which I was appointed a preacher and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles." (2 *Tim.* I: 11; *cf.* 1 *Tim.* II: 7). He also distinguishes, after an enumeration of the leading church offices by asking: "Are all teachers?" (1 *Cor.*

XII: 29). But nowhere, perhaps, does the distinction or contrast appear more marked than in the application of the terms to the apostles generally. It is a most remarkable fact that not until after Christ's resurrection, save in a single instance, and that emphatic of the contrast we are noticing, are they ever said to teach, though they are often said to preach. Evidently it would be improper to call them teachers in the technical sense of the term, until after Christ's ascension. The instance alluded to is in Mark VI: 30: "And the apostles gathered together unto Jesus; and they reported to him all things, both what they did and what they taught." Compared with other texts, this shows that while they might preach or proclaim the glad tidings as heralds, freely, their attempts at teaching were under the careful supervision of the Divine Teacher, or in other words, He had not yet sent them forth as fully competent to teach the doctrines of Christianity. They stood related to Him somewhat as native preachers among the heathen stand related to the missionary or teacher, as he is commonly called. After Christ's ascension, however, they are at once said to teach as well as to preach. And all this is in harmony with the Apostolic Constitutions, which say of the morning of the ascension: "And at the time of early dawn, our Lord lifted his hands and laid them upon the heads of the eleven disciples, and gave to them the gift of the priesthood." Whatever errors these Constitutions may involve, it is evident from this, that, in the minds of their compilers or authors, the apostles were not considered as fully competent to

teach prior to this time. All this accords, moreover, with the caution enjoined by Paul against putting a man too hastily into the eldership as a pastor-teacher. He may not be "a novice." (1 *Tim.* III: 6). And it throws a flood of light upon the unqualified injunction laid by the same apostle upon a woman's teaching. (1 *Tim.* II: 12). He does not forbid her preaching or heralding the glad tidings; he does not forbid her prophesying, which is a form of preaching rather than of teaching, for he gives directions as to how she may prophesy (1 *Cor.* XI: 5, 6), and Philip had four daughters who prophesied, (*Acts* XXI: 9), while the prophet Joel anticipated that daughters as well as sons should prophesy under the Christian dispensation, (*Acts* II: 16 *sq.*); he does not forbid her teaching as a mother would teach her children, (*Titus* II: 4, 5), nor as any member of a church in a conference meeting or in private may teach, (*Col.* III: 16; *Heb.* V: 12; VIII: 11); but he does, nevertheless, in some sense, strictly and unqualifiedly forbid a woman to teach; and in what sense can it be if not in that of filling the office of a public church teacher?

(*b.*) *Nature of the Contrast.*

The nature of the contrast we are considering is the same as that between a text and its exposition. *To preach* is from *praeco*, *a public crier*, *a common crier*, *a beadle* κήρυξ, one who called the people together into public assemblies, commanded order when the assemblies were convened, proclaimed the names of parties at suit in courts of justice and announced the sentences

of the courts. The primary idea is that of announcing or proclaiming what is authorized by others rather than one's own reasoning processes or convictions. The primary idea of teaching, on the other hand, is that of expounding, as, for example, a text, a system of philosophy or the laws of nature. Cremer's Biblico-Theological Lexicon of the New Testament, distinguishes thus: "κηρύσσειν (to preach or to herald) differs from διδάσκειν (to teach) in that it means simply the making known, whereas διδάσκειν denotes continuous instruction in the truths of salvation." Christ sent his disciples to preach, when he instructed them to announce that the kingdom of heaven was at hand, and both his forerunner, John the Baptist and himself, were preachers in so far as they proclaimed the same glad tidings. But Jesus taught the people when He gave the sermon on the mount, or when He opened unto them the Scriptures. Paul taught when he wrote his epistles. God "has *manifested His word* in the preaching;" but the overseer is expected to "hold fast the faithful word according to the teaching," that is, scripturally expounded, "that he may be able, with the same teaching, both to exhort and to refute the gainsayers." (*Tit.* 1: 3, 9.) Timothy was to "preach the word;" but he was "to reprove, rebuke and exhort, with all long suffering and teaching," (2 *Tim.* 4: 2). A man might preach or herald without doing much more than the parrot which repeats articulate speech; but he could not teach without a draft upon powers of reason as well as of utterance. "He that heareth" may "say, come" but not every one that heareth can teach

what is involved in coming to Christ. Preaching is in order to teaching, and hence the term *preach* sometimes covers the idea of teaching; but teaching is never in order to preaching. Preaching the gospel makes disciples; teaching trains them when made. The contrast between the terms *preach* and *teach* or *preacher* and *teacher* involves, then, a correspondence or correlation, and that of precisely the same nature as that which exists in the two great divisions of the pastor's work, making disciples and training them; whence the propriety of calling him either or both evangelist and teacher, is manifest.

(c.) *Herald and Evangelist.*

But still further. The word *preach* in the New Testament is the rendering of two radically different words and their cognates, and, though what we have said thus far is substantially applicable to both, there is a difierence between them. One of these words is *κηρύσσειν* from *κήρυξ herald*, as above, and the other is *εὐαγγελίζειν* from *εὐάγγελος a reward given to one who brings good tidings*, and then *the good tidings themseslves*. In Luke IV: 43, as rendered respectively in King James' version and that of the American Bible Union, we have a very good illustration of the difference between them. The former reads, "I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also;" the latter: "I must publish the good news of the kingdom of God to other cities also." The former rendering gives no more hint of the "good news" than would the term *κηρύσσειν*, but the latter embodies and expresses

it as does the term εὐαγγελίζειν. In Luke VIII: 1, the terms are used in contrast with each other in the same passage, thus: "And it came to pass afterward that He journeyed through every city and village, preaching (κηρύσσων) and publishing the good news (εὐαγγελιζόμενος) of the kingdom of God." In many places the common version is quite defective, in that it does not make this distinction appear by expressing "the glad tidings" involved in εὐαγγελίζειν as it is generally expressed in the version of the American Bible Union. Acts VIII: 4, 12, 25, 35, 40, are good illustrations. The The herald or κήρυξ may convey good or bad tidings; the evangelist only good. Paul conceived himself to be a herald at a great contest in which some were to win and some to fail, when he said: "But I keep under my body and bring it into subjection, lest, haply, having preached (heralded) to others, I myself should be rejected." (1 *Cor.* IX: 27). He figured himself as an evangelist when he said: "Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel," (1 *Cor.* I: 17). If *to preach*, mean to preach the gospel and come from κηρύσσειν, τό εὐαγγέλιον must be either added or understood; while if it come from εὐαγγελίζειν, the idea is involved in the word itself. As a translation of the latter word, therefore, *to preach* means somewhat more than it does as a translation of the former. The extra force of εὐαγγελίζειν may be seen, perhaps, in the extra importance of the evangelist as compared with the herald, both in the Scriptures and in current speech. It is remarkable that while the terms *herald* and *evangelist* in the original occur the same number of times and the

verb cognates of the former a larger number than those of the latter, still the herald is hardly known in current speech and never in church offices, while the evangelist is known in both.

If, now, we inquire for the specific difference in these terms as related to the subject under consideration, we shall find, by an examination of their uses, that the evangelist-preacher is a little nearer the teacher than is the herald-preacher. Robinson, in his Lexicon of the New Testament, makes *εὐαγγελιον*, *the gospel* or *good news*, after the day of Pentecost, to comprise the gospel scheme, the plan of redemption through Christ, including all its doctrines, precepts, promises and privileges. (*Rom.* XVI: 25, *Acts* XV: 7, XX: 24; 1 *Pet.* IV: 17). The verb, at times, corresponds in this wide scope of meaning. (*Gal.* I: 8, 11; *Acts* XIV: 15, *et cet*). We see, then, that the evangelist transcends the herald in the direction of teaching; so that the difference between an evangelist etymological and a teacher is less than that between a herald and a teacher; whence the strong probability again that the evangelist and the teacher were ultimately one, a probability somewhat strengthened, perhaps, by the fact of the term *evangelist* becoming an official title, while the term *herald* is hardly known.

Practical Union of the Terms.

But our fourth and perhaps strongest argument for the union of the terms *evangelist* and *teacher*, as a compound description of one and the same officer, is

the actual union of what they represent in both Scripture and practical life.

1. The catalogues of officers given, are formal enumerations and designations, and they, as already seen, actually put evangelist and teacher in the same rank, and that a rank superior to elders. This, certainly, is significant, and, what is more, it is entirely ignored, or unaccounted for on any of the current theories. It is also in keeping with the compound designation of the next office, that of pastor-teacher or presbyter-bishop, and equally descriptive. While the pastor-teacher, as suggested by these descriptive terms, is especially given to pastoral work and such teaching as naturally accompanies it, the evangelist-teacher, as the terms indicate, is especially given to preaching the gospel and such teaching as naturally accompanies it,—a more emphatic form of teaching. It is difficult to conceive of a more brief and complete characterization of the office than is given in this complex terminology.

2. This union accords precisely with the work mapped out in the Great Commission for the leading class of Christian workers.—The leading class, we say, for nothing can precede preaching and nothing can exceed teaching. — The commission enjoins both preaching or evangelizing and teaching. "Go, disciple all nations," says Matthew; "preach the good news," says Mark; the one form of statement being the exposition of the other. Disciples are made by preaching, not by teaching. But disciples having been made, then the direction is, "teach them to observe all things whatsoever" the Saviour com-

mands. Thus the evangelist at the beginning of the work becomes the teacher at the end. The whole work is that of an evangelist-teacher.

3. This, again, accords precisely with the work as it is now prosecuted. A missionary who founds a church among the heathen first evangelizes and then teaches. He can do no otherwise and succeed. Disciples are made by preaching; they are built up in grace and knowledge by teaching. And both these works the missionary does as one and the same man, they being the two hemispheres of his ministerial activity. He begins an evangelist and ends a teacher, the latter and more comprehensive title being as naturally accorded to him as it was to the apostles or the Saviour.

4. This is, moreover, substantially the work of every pastor, using the term now in its current sense. His process of building up his church is unendingly preaching or evangelizing and teaching, and never *vice versa*, nor one at the expense of the other. Doubtless some men's gifts may lie more in one direction than in the other, but the successful modern pastor must do both works. He can omit neither and succeed. The idea with which we were made familiar when somewhat younger than now in church work, that every sermon should have gospel enough in it to save a soul, may appear to others very lovely and loving, as it did to us, but in our present estimation it is nevertheless very shallow. The pastor has other work to do as well as to call the unconverted to Christ. This is his work, in so far as he is an evange-

list, but it is not specifically his work in so far as he is a teacher. The entire system of theology, including the evidences of Christianity and its history, together with the practical duties of the Christian to himself, his family, the church and the world, come within the scope of the teachers' work, and are no less important in their places than is evangelizing the unbelieving. Indeed, measured by the time it will require to prepare for and do the work, teaching will be found to be much the larger part of the pastors, work. Nor can it be passed over to the Sabbath school teacher or theological professor, as though either of them corresponded to the third office in the apostolic schedule. Neither of them is church-teacher in the sense we are considering, and neither occupies the position assigned to him in the schedules. The one occupies an inferior or auxiliary position, and the other stands very differently related to the church, besides not answering the description of an evangelist-teacher. In fact, neither has a place in the schedule of offices the Holy Spirit has made essential to the full organization of the church, neither being parts of the organic structure, but both growing or not growing out of the work of the church, according to circumstances.

5. This union of the evangelist and teacher in him whom we call pastor, accords with the New Testament description of him. Do not mistake our proposition. We say description of him whom *we* call pastor, not of him whom the Scriptures call so, for they specifically designate the elders and not the teachers as

pastors. The description referred to in our proposition we have given any thing like minutely in only a single case, that of Timothy. He is called an evangelist (2 *Tim.* IV: 5), and nearly all his earlier ministry was spent, it would seem, in the work of evangelizing, unless it would be more consistent to view him as an apostolic aid or vicar and consequently uniting in himself both the evangelizing and teaching functions, as did an apostle. But the latter part of his life was spent at the head of a church as teacher-evangelist, or bishop, to use a later terminology, in a position of manifest superiority to elders or pastor-teachers, who fill the fourth place in the apostolic schedules. If tradition may be relied upon, he died bishop of Ephesus, and many of the other evangelists named in the New Testament served as bishops in other places. (*Schaff's Apos. Ch.* 520,[2]. *cf. Hippolytus II.*, 132). But passing tradition for little or much, Timothy, who is our described evangelist in the ripest period of New Testament history, was a church teacher at Ephesus, and not merely an itinerant missionary; and he taught elders as well as people, thus indicating his superior rank. "These things command and teach," said his guiding apostle,—among them things concerning both elders and deacons as well as people. "Till I come give attention to reading, to exhortation, to teaching. Meditate on these things; give thyself *wholly* to them; that thy progress may be manifest to all. Give heed to thyself and to the teaching; continue in them," directions which eye steadily the studious teacher, (1. *Tim.* IV: 11, 13, 15, 16). Again, the apostle exhorting him

to "endure hardness" with himself "as a good soldier," pictures himself to him as "a preacher, an apostle, and a teacher," (2 *Tim.* 1: 8, 11). Through both epistles Timothy figures as a church teacher with great clearness. And with no less clearness does his superiority in rank to all other church officers appear. (See especially chapters three and five of the first epistle, where elders and deacons are treated). If any individuals among them were disposed to teach unsound doctrine, he was to charge them to teach no other doctrine than that which had apostolic and hence divine sanction, (1. *Tim.* 1: 3). Thus with the greatest clearness Timothy at Ephesus corresponds to the evangelist-teacher, on the one hand, and to our modern pastor on the other. His work in relation to the church was substantially the same as that of either James at Jerusalem, or of "the angels" of the churches of Asia whom the Spirit addressed as the heads of those churches.

6. Theorize as we may, the universal Christian instinct demands in the modern pastor just what the united terms evangelist and teacher express. It may call him pastor, elder, bishop, preacher, teacher or doctor, its more coveted equivalent, but the fruitage of this bipartite minister it craves and must have. The churches cannot divide him, taking either half, and prosper. They need the whole man with his two ministerial as well as his two material arms and eyes or feet. Evangelist is as indispensable to their work as teacher, and teacher as evangelist. "The bride" has to say "Come," and likewise to make known to

principalities and powers in heavenly places even, the "manifold wisdom of God." Thousands of churches in this land are to-day without either half of such a minister, and are hence to be pitied; but those who have one-half at the loss of the other are but little better off, and will not have that long, probably. Their full demands are not met, and therefore nature cries out for change. It is notorious with what avidity churches grasp one class of ministers, and how soon they let them go because those ministers have exhausted their treasures. Very largely in this ministerial deficiency must we, doubtless, find the cause of the short pastorates so universally lamented. It is a deficiency for which ministers themselves are not wholly responsible, since there is a diversity of gifts, and which the Head of the church does not seek to remedy, as do our modern churches, by stretching ministers upon an iron bedstead to meet an ideal and throwing them aside when their lacerated muscles and broken bones render them unfit for further work or stretching. Where the customs force, the Almighty supplements or adjusts. The churches are partly right and partly wrong,—right in their instinctive demand for the evangelist-teacher, and wrong in that they do not know how to find him, if we may say they know the nature of their own craving. But right or wrong they witness for our theory.

Conclusion and Application of the Argument.

Sustained, then, by such a variety of historical, exegetical and practical considerations, as well as indi-

rectly by the fearful blanks and confusions of the current systems of church officering, we think we cannot err in maintaining that the third office in the apostolic schedules, and described as that of evangelist-teacher, is to be perpetuated as the first after living incumbents of the apostolic and prophetic offices have ceased. We may designate it appropriately by either of the Scripture terms applied to it, but should not confound it with another office, and much less annihilate it altogether. The trouble has been in the past, and now is, that the teacher's identity is lost; now, as in the Episcopal system, by first reducing him to an elder and then re-naming and exalting him to a human invention—a modern diocese—at the same time investing him with functions unknown to the New Testament; again, as in the Presbyterian system, by reducing him, in like manner, to an elder and then wrongly relating both teacher and elder to the church and sundry other bodies in the matter of government; and again, as in the Congregational, when minus the ruling eldership, by his absorbing the eldership, on the one hand, and lacking their moral and practical support on the other; while in all he figures under a name or in a place which is sure to mislead. If the schedules of the inspired apostles were followed, and the functions of office sought in their appropriate quarter, rather than in the sphere of another, all would be simple and easy. We should then have, in the fully officered church, three offices as the Episcopal system demands and the Presbyterian implies, though with functions somewhat varied from those of either system, of course, since the

one looks for the teacher's functions in the rank of apostles above him, and the other in that of the elders below, and we should still preserve the rights of the people (laity) as advocated by the Congregational system, while we furnished the increased ministerial force which the larger churches diversely, though well-nigh universally, seek and none but partially find.

We should also have, it is worth while to notice, a very feasible basis of union between the different evangelical denominations in the matter of church government. It is indeed remarkable how near such a union is already reached, if we might take such writers as Archbishop Whately as an exponent of evangelical Episcopacy on the one extreme, the methods of the larger Baptist churches for supplying the lack of the eldership as an index of what might be on the other, and then suppose that Presbyterianism becomes democratic or congregational instead of republican between them. Hear the Archbishop, who concedes that diocesan episcopacy is without support from the New Testament:

"The plan pursued by the apostles," says he, "seems to have been to establish a great number of small (in comparison with modern churches) distinct and independent communities, each governed by its own single bishop, consulting, no doubt, with his own presbyters, and accustomed to act in concurrence with them, and occasionally conferring with the brethren of other churches, but owing no submission to the rulers of any other church or to any central common authority except the apostles themselves."

Now, simply introduce into this scheme, as we have suggested for Presbyterianism, the democratic element, which, conducted according to our second method, would be no harsh innovation for either, and then merely understand the bishop to be a teacher filling our third office, and, we have precisely what we have been advocating and almost every large Baptist church in some form possesses or seeks, though under other names. We think we speak advisedly with reference to the large Baptist churches possessing or seeking a substitute for the eldership, having made inquiry by personal correspondence to a considerable extent and not having found one in any of the leading cities heard from, but that had a self or church appointed committee of deacons to act in concert with the pastor in shaping business for the church, a prudential or standing committee, or some other near equivalent. Necessity or instinct seems to compel something of the kind, it being utterly preposterous to think of running a large church on the plan of prosecuting all deliberation and business in committee of the whole. How easy then to wheel evangelical Christendom into practical unity on the matter of officers and government if the churches, guided by their own instincts, could only jostle themselves a little farther in the direction of the apostolic schedules and methods! May the day speedily arrive when the simplicity of the New Testament ideals shall substitute the multiform complexity of human departures from it !

Section VI.—Functions of the Teacher.

After what has already been said we need spend but a few moments upon functions. Since, however, the office has become somewhat entangled with others we need to discriminate a little. We have presented the teacher, as in the main, correspondent to our modern

Pastor.

But he is not sole pastor, according to the modern idea. Indeed, he is not particularly emphasized as pastor. The work of pastor or shepherd is so extensive a work, requiring so much time as well as such varied wisdom and personal adaptation, that the head of the church, the chief shepherd, has committed it to a plurality of men in each church, the eldership, of whom the teacher, by virtue of his superior rank, may be counted the leader or president. But so far as personal visitation or that kind of work usually denominated pastoral is concerned, we do not understand him to be charged with any special responsibility. Indeed, the fact that his supervision is necessarily quite general as well as that his preaching and teaching labor require so much of his time, would suggest that he could do under many circumstances comparatively little of such work. All pastors of large churches will feel the force of the suggestion, and do try, we presume, in some way to supply the felt deficiency.

Simply adding, then, that the fourth office is specifically named *pastors and teachers*, we refer the farther consideration of the teacher's pastoral functions to our treatment of the eldership in another chapter, as we do

also the several other functions which are common to him and them, he being elder as well as teacher, on the common Scriptural principle which governs offices, that the greater includes the less.

Preaching.

As the term *evangelist* would indicate, preaching is a leading function of the evangelist-teacher,—preaching the glad tidings to the sin oppressed and perishing. Whosoever hears the voice of the Spirit saying: "Come to the waters," may repeat and enforce the blessed invitation dropping like an inestimable pearl from the skies; but it is the evangelist-teacher's clearly defined duty, made so by a special call from God who has entrusted him with the gospel, and by a formal ratification of that call by his brethren of the church. The "royal priesthood" may and ought to sound out the gospel as their various secular avocations will admit; he has no secular avocation and must do it as a part of his life work. (2 *Tim.* II: 4). He is charged before God and Christ Jesus who will judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and kingdom, to preach the word; to apply himself in season, out of season. (2 *Tim.* IV: 1, 2). This charge, gathering into itself the force of the most momentous considerations imaginable, he may not put aside without incurring the most dangerous responsibility.

He is also solemnly charged as to the character of his gospel. The glad tidings are specific in their nature, but cease to be such if made up of other elements than those revealed. They reveal a definite mode of

release to the conscious prisoner in his prison house, a specific remedy for the deadly disease which is threatening his irretrievable ruin. If, therefore, any one, even an angel from heaven, preach another and an emasculated gospel, let him be accursed. (*Gal.* I: 8). The gospel of Jesus Christ, God's annointed, Him who is "the way, the truth and the life," the gospel which is supposed to have given liberty to the preacher himhimself once a captive, this gospel, as definite in its elements as a chemical substance, is the gospel he is to preach.

Teaching.

Of course, teaching is the business of the teacher and that by way of eminence. Upon the faithful performance of this duty depends very largely the growth of the disciples (scholars) in the knowledge of Him who "called them by His own glory and might," through which knowledge God gives them "all things which pertain to life and godliness." (2 *Pet.* I: 3). Any defect in the teaching may report itself in a corresponding defect in some one's christian character, hence the teacher is to teach all things whatsoever Christ has commanded, (*Matt.* XXVIII: 20). Nor is he to add for commandments, the doctrines of men, (*Matt.* XV: 9; *Rev.* XXII: 18). He is to study to show himself a workman approved of God, (2 *Tim.* II: 15).

He is, moreover, to have respect to what others may teach, speaking himself the things which become sound teaching, and reproving sharply, if need be, those who in their inferior relations teach the things they ought

not. (*Tit.* II: 1; I: 11, 13). He is a teacher of elders as well as of people, and that notwithstanding they themselves are pastor-teachers. (2 *Tim.* II: 2). Thus he is a teacher of teachers, a position than which none can be more responsible in the kingdom of God on earth. What breadth and accuracy of view does it require! What comprehension of the overmastering themes of the Bible and eternity! What study! What annointing of the Spirit who teaches us all things!

Still further, he is to "affirm constantly" the moral obligations of disciples, "that they who have believed may be careful to take the lead in good works." (*Tit.* III: 8). And these he is to connect appropriately with the great central doctrine of the new birth, that from it they may receive their appropriate emphasis. (*Cf.* III: 4–7).

In all his teaching, however, he is to avoid strifes or logomachy. "The servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle toward all, apt in teaching, patient of evil; in meekness admonishing those who oppose themselves, if haply God may give them repentance unto the full knowledge of the truth." (2 *Tim.* II: 24, 25.)

Nor is he allowed to teach dictatorially or as a lord over God's heritage. The archons of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, said the Saviour to his disciples, but not so shall it be among you, (*Mark* X: 42). Teaching needs the force of revealed truth uttered by the Spirit of God for its support, and not human weakness, vaulting insanely into the place of power, and fulminating the fire works of hot temper and imperial dignity.

Superintendence.

The functions already named involve, of course, more or less the general superintendence of church affairs, but they do not involve all that the teacher's office involves. We do not mean to insinuate that he is sole superintendent, for we have already indicated and shall still further show that the eldership divide this responsibility with him in some measure. But as is natural, he is superintendent in a higher degree than they, his superintendency involving watch-care over them as well as over others, though in a modified sense. (1 *Tim.* IV: 11, *cf.* III: 1 *sq;* also V: 7, 17, 19).

He, like a thoroughly instructed scribe, is supposed to be posted as to law, and hence to know how things ought to be done "in the church of God, which is the pillar and ground of the truth." (1 *Tim.* III: 15). He is therefore specially enjoined to "set things in order." (*Tit.* I: 5). If elders or deacons are needed, he is supposed to be especially adapted to nominate, as knowing their scriptural qualifications, and, perhaps we may add, personal gifts. (*Tit.* I: 5; 2 *Tim.* II: 2; *cf. Acts* XIV: 23; VI: 2, 3). If any are to be ordained (using the term now in its popular though perverted sense) he is especially though not exclusively qualified to impose hands. (1 *Tim.* V: 22; IV: 14). If any commit sin which needs to be rebuked before all, that the rest may fear, he is the proper person to do it. (1 *Tim.* V: 20). If special instructions are needed in the management of discipline or other church business, his lips are "the priest's," which are supposed "to keep knowledge," since he is teacher emphatically. And yet,

as before suggested, he is in no sense lord over God's heritage, and is really disqualified for his position, needing, it may be, a thorn in his flesh, if his rank as chief officer in the church elate more than his responsibilities humble him. Nowhere, perhaps, does his position of superintendency, with its trusts and responsibilities, stand out more significantly than under the character of the angels of the seven churches of Asia, seen by the revelator as stars in the right hand of God. On the one hand they are addressed as though on their light depended the weal or woe, prosperity or extinction of the churches, indeed, as if synonymous with the churches; and on the other, they lie tremulously gleaming in the hand of Him whose light they borrow and reflect, as though a single mishap would send them like blurting meteors to the blackness of darkness forever. What elevation! What conscious and becoming weakness! But even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.

Of course some things additional will need to be said on the relations of the teacher to the eldership, but they can be best said in another chapter upon that office.

CHAPTER IV.

OFFICERS CONTINUED.—ELDERS.

THE fourth office in the apostolic schedule, or the second among existing church offices, is the eldership, called *pastors and teachers* or *pastor-teachers*. It therefore demands our attention next. Its general relation to government we have already discussed, and will now give more special attention to its functions, authority and relations.

Before doing so, however, it will be appropriate to remark what appears to be self-evident, but what is not much observed as such, that we are to seek for the characteristics of the eldership in those passages of Scripture which treat of the eldership, and not in those which treat of apostles or teachers. There are features common to all, but with these we are not now especially concerned.

Again, it is important to observe that the official features of an officer may be somewhat modified by the presence or absence of a higher officer. In his absence there might devolve a degree of authority and responsibility which would not devolve in his presence. This principle is especially important as related to teachers and elders. All of the churches established by the apostles did not have teachers, though all, probably, did have elders. Provision existed for the office,

but incumbents were not really found in all instances. The same is true still. There are over eight thousand more Baptist churches in the United States than there are teachers called pastors. Now had each of these churches a board of elders, as the New Testament by precedent teaches they should have, there would devolve upon them a higher responsibility in the absence of the teacher than there would in his presence, they of necessity and propriety absorbing in themselves somewhat of his office work. This may account, in part, for the apparent trenching upon each other's province indicated in applying the term teacher to both alike.

With these preliminaries we will now investigate the functions and authority of the eldership, following the New Testament, which appears generally to imply the absence of the teacher, after which we will notice more specifically their relations to the teacher.

SECTION I.—THE FUNCTIONS.

(*a*). *Teaching*

Teaching or preaching (to admit the common indefiniteness in the use of terms) is of course regarded as the leading function by those who make the elder identical with the teacher. But while aptness to teach is one of the qualifications for the office, (1 *Tim.* III: 2; *Tit.* I: 9), and elders are denominated pastors and teachers, (*Eph.* IV: 11), teaching in the sense expected of a modern pastor is not quite the teaching meant, we apprehend. Not that teaching of the highest order is undesirable or inadmissible, but that it is not deman-

ded. And this we conclude for the reasons; 1, that a distinction between teachers and elders or pastor-teachers was actually drawn by the Holy Spirit, the one being the third and the other the fourth office in the church; 2, that Timothy, the Ephesian teacher, was a teacher of elders as well as of people, resembling in this respect James at Jerusalem and the apostles wherever they went; 3, that it is incredible that modern pulpit ability was to be found in a number of persons in every church called from the ranks of the common people to the eldership; 4, that the character of the ordinary meetings for worship did not require it, they corresponding very closely to the synagogue and our modern conference meetings as can be seen by reference to 1 Cor. XIV: 26, or to Justin Martyr's writings, pp. 63, 65; 5, that much of the teaching they were expected to do was private, (*Acts* XX: 20); *and* 6, that a distinction was made between those who taught and those who did not. (1 *Tim.* V: 17). While then the highest possible order of teaching may be appropriate to the eldership, and while there is an imperative demand for the multiplication of teaching forces, as the call for lay preachers would indicate, we can only demand in the eldership such teaching ability as the ranks of the people can furnish or as is compatible with the pursuit of secular callings for a livlihood.

(*b*). *Pastoral Work.*

With the eldership, pastoral work naturally precedes teaching as it does in the compound designation of office, pastor-teachers. It gives to them the name

overseers or bishops, and was called, by both Peter and Paul, *tending or shepherding the flock.* (*Acts* xx: 28; 1 *Pt.* v: 2). Including of course such private or public instruction as they might be able to give, whether for edification (*Eph.* iv: 12) or protection, (*Acts* xx: 29; *Tit.* i: 9), it also involves much more and especially,

(c) *Presiding in Meetings.*

Presiding (ruling in the common version) is one of the most common functions ascribed to the eldership. "Let the elders who preside well be counted worthy of double honor." (1 *Tim.* v: 17). "Presiding well over his own house" in order to presiding well over the church of God, is one of the prescribed qualifications, and is indicative of the character of the function. (1 *Tim.* iii: 5; *Tit.* i: 6). By presiding is meant, not simply acting the part of a moderator in business meetings, as important as this may be. More special reference is doubtless had to presiding in meetings for worship, including the Lord's table. Justin Martyr, who is one of the earliest writers subsequent to the apostles, speaks of "the president of the brethren" as administering instruction after the reading of the Word by the reader, of his offering prayer in connection with the supper, and of his receiving the collections to succor orphans and widows, the sick or the needy, the stranger and the bondman. (*Works, p.* 62, 65). To preside is therefore to do a variety of things which require aptitude and skill. To preside well even in a prayer meeting is worthy of double honor in our day.

(*d.*) *Leadership.*

Leadership is nearly akin to presiding and yet is distinctly specified as a function of elders. "Salute all who are your leaders." "Obey those who are your leaders, and submit." "Remember those who were your leaders." (*Heb.* XIII: 24, 17, 7). As the Saviour goes before His sheep, so would He have His undershepherds, and that not merely as speakers or presiding officers, but as watchmen and examples, and especially as a counseling head. The elders, whether with or without the teacher, constitute the spiritual head of the church, charged with the duties of the guiding senate already noticed, with making provision for and conducting their worship, bound to watch for their souls as those who must give account, to be patterns of faith and godliness, and, of course, to be foremost in encountering obloquy or danger. (*Heb.* XIII: 17, 7; *Acts.* XX: 31). With a New Testament board of elders, not only is a church inexcusable for shutting its house of worship for want of leaders, but it is also officered for a many-faced campaign against the enemy.

(*e*). *Governing.*

Christ's undershepherds may not, like the archons of the gentiles, lord it over the flock. (*Matt.* XX: 25, 26; 1 *Pt.* V: 3), and yet shepherds are governors. "They (elders) were appointed," says Dr. Hackett, "to watch over their (the churches) discipline and welfare." (*Com. on Acts* XX: 17). As an advisory council, and as spiritual executives elevated to the post of leadership by both the Holy Spirit and the church,

they are governors in a very important sense, though not invested with absolute or ultimate authority.

"The government of the church," says Neander, "was the peculiar office of such overseers; it was their business to watch over the general order; to maintain the purity of the Christian doctrine and of the Christian practice,—to guard against abuses,—to admonish the faulty,—and to guide the public deliberations; as appears from the passages of the New Testament where their functions are described. But their government by no means excluded the participation of the whole church in the management of their common concerns, as may be inferred from what we have already remarked respecting the nature of Christian communion, and is also evident from many individual examples of the apostolic church."

But having already developed their general relation to government (*Chap. II.*), we dismiss the subject.

(*f*). *Caring for the Sick.*

A good shepherd not only feeds the well of his flock but nurses the sick. Hence, says James: "Is any sick among you, let him call for the elders of the church and let them pray over him annointing him with oil in the name of the Lord." (v: 14). In the country where those lived to whom James wrote, annointing was a common and useful remedy, as it probably is in warm climates generally. 'Understanding the precept then to be a broad generalization of principles, teaching to minister, after the example of the Saviour, to both the bodies and the souls of men; to do this by a judicious

use of faith and means, and to do it on the part of the church officially or systematically for the sake of the greater efficiency; it is as binding to day as ever, and there is an immense field for its application both in private and in public or hospital care of the sick. Would that our churches were fully awake to its importance! They would save themselves much censure, much spiritual power, and would multiply their efficiency beyond measure. Christian nurture covers the whole man, but in our time and country is almost wholly neglected so far as the physical is concerned. It is to be devoutly hoped that both a Scriptural eldership and their use of the function under consideration may be speedily restored to Zion.

(*g*). *Imposition of Hands.*

Not merely apostles and teachers, but also elders, were accustomed to impose hands in ordination (1 *Tim.* IV: 14; V: 22). Consequently, we rank imposition of hands among the functions of the eldership. For a more full treatment of the subject we refer to the supplemental chapter on ordination.

Here, suffice it that we limit the function of the eldership proper in distinction from what, in the general confusion of thought, is denominated the eldership. It is customary among Baptists to denominate a number of pastors convened at an ordination council, and among Presbyterians to denominate the pastors and elders of several churches convened in official session, an eldership, or a presbytery. But neither of them is a New Testament eldership. *Πρεσβυτέριον*, one of

the words for eldership, occurs but three times (*Luke* XXII: 66; *Acts* XXII: 5; 1 *Tim.* IV: 14), and in two of those instances refers to the Sanhedrim, or a section of it, while in the other it refers to the body which imposed hands upon Timothy. *Γερουσία*, the other word, occurs but once, and then refers to the Sanhedrim as before, and is rendered *senate*. Like our word *senate*, which is the equivalent for both terms, eldership is a collective noun designating an official and representative body specifically related to the people whom it represents. But the only Christian body in the New Testament which has elders is the church Therefore, a Christian eldership is the board of elders in a particular church, and it is a loose perversion of terms to call either of the bodies above alluded to an eldership. We might with equal propriety call a meeting of aldermen from different cities a board of aldermen, or a collection of senators from different States a senate. All the senators of all the States could not constitute a senate, because it is a specific representative body differently composed. And no more can any number of elders from any number of churches constitute an eldership, because that is also a specific body representing a single church. Not even does the eldership of the church collective in heaven, which the Revelator saw, furnish any exception. When, then, we say the eldership has the imposition of hands among its functions, we mean the eldership of a particular church, such as our Baptist and Congregational fathers recognized, and such as imposed hands upon Paul, Barnabas and Timothy (*Acts* XIII: 3; 1 *Tim.* IV: 14).

(*h*). *Administration of Ordinances.*

As elders are authorized to impart as well as have received the imposition of hands, which by general consent looks toward the administration of the ordinances, there can be no doubt as to their functions in this regard. They may both baptize and administer the supper.

Such being the more prominent functions of the eldership, it will be seen that with the teacher they stand as the spiritual head of the Christian community, bearing its heaviest burdens, encountering its special dangers, and, of course, invested with the highest authority committed to any officials, since authority and responsibility are natural correlatives.

It will be appropriate, therefore,

Section II.—To Inquire into the Nature of their Authority.

Of course its nature will accord with their relations and functions, the latter of which we have noticed, and some of the former of which may be stated as follows:

On the one hand, they stand related to the Holy Spirit as to the primal source of both their position and its authority, and on the other, to the church as to the secondary source, it having solemnly ratified the divine choice. It is their right as well as duty, therefore, to use whatever authority may belong to their position, and the duty of the church to sustain them in doing so.

Again, their relation to the appointing Spirit is such that they are under imperative obligation to adopt his

methods of procedure, while their relation to the church is such that they are doubly enjoined to use those methods. Hence they may not, under the plea of authority, employ measures which are really a subversion of the only authority given, as, for instance, act independently of the church in a matter where their authority is made to depend upon the special sanction or direction of the church. But while every member of the church is bound to respect the authority already vested in the eldership, the eldership, on the other hand, are bound to respect the authority reserved in the church.

We may say, then, their authority is

Not Coercive.

The apostles themselves, the highest church authority under Christ, were forbidden the use of such power. "Ye know," said the Saviour, "that the rulers (the archons, despotic rulers) of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and they that are great exercise authority over them. Not so shall it be among you; but whoever would become great among you, let him be your minister (waiter); and whoever would be first among you, let him be your servant; even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" (*Matt.* xx: 25, 26). No imperious coercion, or even dictation, then, may mar the beauty of the authority given to the eldership or the freedom given to the disciples. A high and holy respect for private judgment, enforced by a manifest readiness to serve in all humility, is enjoined, as

also an utter repudiation of force, as a means of grace. It is a wonder of wonders that the pious and evangelical Augustine could ever have sanctioned such a principle as *coge aut compelle intrare ecclesiam* (force or compel entrance into the church), and it is a still greater wonder that for so many centuries the immense establishment of Rome, not to mention her imitative offspring, could work the wretched theory with her inquisitors and guillotines.

Not a Commanding Infallibility.

No more is the authority that of a *commanding infallibility.*

Jesus, the Head of the Church, is infallible, and has the right to command. His inspired apostles were, by virtue of their inspiration, also infallible, and did sometimes claim the right to command. But elders are not said to be inspired, and hence can claim no right on that score. Indeed, they themselves were subject to correction at the hands of an acknowledged teacher like Timothy. Their position, given in consideration of special gifts adapting them to it, and having the sanction of both the Holy Spirit and the church, should, of course, give their utterances special force, but does not lift them to the dizzy height of infallibility. And whenever any elder or eldership, papal or protestant, lifts itself to that elevation, it is time its office were vacated. Elders may utter things infallibly true or proper, and are supposed to do so as uttering the voice of Christ; but, while this may justify and even enjoin obedience on the part of the people, it does not justify

and much less enjoin the assumption of infallibility on their own part.

These two ideas of authority are the favorites of all ambitious leaders, and about the only ones many minds are able to concieve. Hence we find them in nearly all ecclesiastical systems which aspire to a world wide and external catholicity and unity. They are the ideas under which the few become powerful while the many become ignorant, superstitious and truculent. We must find another kind then if we find any scriptural authority in the New Testament eldership. And another kind we think we can find. We will name it,

Functional Authority,

Or authority to discharge and to be sustained while discharging the functions of their office.

Some of these functions we have already named, and by them let us illustrate. If, for instance, imposition of hands in ordination or the administration of ordinances be functions of the eldership, then they have authority to use those functions without questioning interference from any individual source. The Holy Spirit and the church have given that authority, and however much its use might annoy any captious spirits, they have no right to do otherwise than respect it. The law in the case would be, "Obey those who are your leaders."

Take another illustration from the function which names them *presidents*. Presiding at the meetings of the church and giving general direction to them, is their duty. Hence they have authority to do so, and

this precludes the right of any other members of the body to interfere with their performance of that duty. They may not be thought to do it as well as is desirable; (the apostle saw a difference in elders, 1 *Tim.* v:17), but they have the authority duly given, and that authority must be respected. Not to respect it is to introduce rebellion and anarchy, which are far worse than the evil complained of.

The same rule applies to the functions of *governing* and *leading* as we have defined them. They are no interlopers when they introduce cases of dicipline or give counsel as to what is appropriate to be done in them. It is as much their duty to do both as it is a marshal's to arrest a criminal or a judge's to charge a jury. And whether or not the church coincide with their view, it is bound to presume favorably of it and to respect them in giving it. Equally true is the same statement as respects what they as teachers and leaders may counsel as to doctrine or policy. Freedom of judgment remains with the body, but not freedom to deny authority to counsel which has already been given to the eldership. Nor may the body encourage any of its members in showing disrespect to it in any way. The authority is theirs, as is also the perplexity and, it may be, the pain and loss in using it, and it would be the quintessence of insult and injury for the church to treat their use of it as an impropriety. Alas! what perils attach to leadership where the very body, or any portion of it which sanctions, and, it may be, entreats the assumption of official authority, turn around and trample upon the very authority they have given! It

is bad enough for church officials to abuse their authority, as sometimes they do, but it is hardly worse than for a church to interfere with its lawful use. Where were order in society if official perogatives were invaded there as they are sometimes in the churches? If then "obey those who are your leaders," mean no more than yield to them their official perogatives and presume in favor of their counsels, it means much more than weight of personal character to which some would reduce their authority. It means much the same as does, "Children, obey your parents." Parents may be poor counsellors, but the presumption is so strong, in their favor, as compared with their children, that this general rule vesting authority in them is given and made strongly binding. Nor ought it to be abrogated unless it were worse in the observance than in the non-observance, in which case the parental relation, as respects government, ought to be dissolved.

In a word, then, we conclude that the authority of the eldership is commensurate with its functions, or, to use a familiar figure from civil society, that representation should be commensurate with taxation. It is true that in the church there are no such penal codes to be administered as we find in the State, and yet it remains that official functions, such as they are, and official authority are nevertheless correlatives. If a man is a spiritual leader, his authority as such is just as sacred as the civil or military leader's. Nay, if there be a difference, it should be in his favor, since he attempts much the harder task.

Section III.—Qualifications.

We should here develop the qualifications of the eldership as we have now done their functions and authority, but they are so explicitly and compactly stated in the epistles to Timothy and Titus that we deem it unnecessary. The reader is therefore referred to 1 Tim. III: 1–7, and Titus I: 5–9

We come, then, to

Section IV.—The Relations of the Elders to Each Other and to the Teacher.

The subject would involve very little difficulty were it not for the complications introduced by the current of events, such as first dropping the teacher's office and then practically finding a place for it among the elders. Enough has already been said to enable a school-boy to properly relate the teacher to the elders, or the elders to each other, in the absence of a teacher, were the question to be treated *de novo*. Common sense would be a sufficient, we might almost say an infallible, guide. In teaching or preaching functions they would differ, as we have shown; in governmental, they would be substantially one, as was implied in what was said of the eldership as one branch of the government, making there no special distinction between teacher and elder. But losing sight of the teacher's office and attempting to create substantially the same out of the eldership, has introduced the troublesome question of *primus inter pares* (first among equals), while the unwarrantable ambition which has aspired to

find for the *primus* a successorship to the apostles, or the Lord of glory, has introduced other perplexing questions.

The facts would seem to be as follows:

1. The teacher's office is distinguished from the elders as we have indicated, and should have remained so.

2. Among the elders, strictly speaking, there was originally no official distinction,—only those natural distinctions as to speaking and other gifts which would commonly be found among a number of men chosen from a limited society. Whether the term *presbyter*, commonly rendered *elder* in our version of the Scriptures, or the term *episcopos*, rendered *bishop*, though sometimes *overseer*, be used, one and identically the same office is indicated, and that without any well established original distinction in favor of bishops. The terms are used interchangeably by the apostle, as may be seen by reference to Acts xx: and Titus i. From this point of view, then, all those writers are correct who so stoutly emphasize the parity of the elders as an argument against episcopacy. But,

3. The nature of the case, as also certain elements clearly discernible in the Word, would of necessity inaugurate some distinction where a presiding teacher was wanting. It would be hardly possible that a board of elders should do business without distinguishing some one of their number as chairman or president. And this distinction would naturally be based upon a manifest distinction of gifts, and would just as na-

turally become permanent as there should be a desire, holy or unholy, for "the best gifts."

Moreover, the Apostle Paul himself pronounced "double honor" upon teaching ability in the eldership, (1 *Tim.* v: 17,) and John, the Revelator, gave to "the angel" of the church a most attractive as well as responsible position when he represented him as synonymous with the church, and glittering like a star in the protecting hand of Deity. Then there were such examples as Peter, a fellow elder," (1 *Pet.* v: 1,) filling an apostolic as well, probably, as a teaching office, and James at Jerusalem figuring in a similar relation. It could hardly fail, therefore, that, in the absence of a regular teacher, there should, in many instances, arise from the midst of the elders themselves one who should practically serve as teacher though retaining still the title of elder. Neander says: (*Ch. Hist. I.*, 187).

The historic progress itself must have introduced many changes; and it would be a mistake if we supposed that every arrangement in the communities where St. Paul wrote his last epistles remained the same as when he sent the first. Thus with regard to the ministration of doctrine, the following gradations are to be distinguished in the progressive development:

"1. It occurred naturally that individuals qualified for it by previous cultivation of mind, were, by virtue of this qualification, particularly called to the regular dispensation of doctrine.

"2. Such persons were commonly ordained and set apart as teachers of the church.

"3. The functions of *church-teacher and elder became more closely connected with each other.* It must have been a salutary thing that *among their presiding officers* there should be also those who possessed the talent for administering the office of teaching."

4. On account of this tendency, which any one can see to be both natural and scriptural, soon after the times of the apostles, the office of bishop came to be distinguished from that of the elders or presbyters, though retaining still one of the names of the original body, thus giving us the teacher in substance, though at the loss of his proper designation and at the expense of many innovations very hurtful to the cause of vital godliness as well as distorting to the church constitution. It is utterly useless to argue that no distinction between bishop and presbyter prevailed in the early post-apostolic churches. It is true that the writings attributed to Ignatius, and upon which the advocates of diocesan episcopacy have relied largely for the support of their cause, are of a very questionable character, and belong mainly to a later period than when this disciple of John was teacher at Antioch. But still there is too much evidence of a distinction to admit of a doubt. Pass with the writings of Ignatius those of Clement of Rome, in which the distinction is generally made, but some of which were of doubtful origin and date; pass also, if any please, the tradition that John the evangelist, after his return from Patmos, appointed certain presbyters in the churches of Asia

to the office of "bishop" for the maintenance of pure doctrine, (*Schaff's Apos. Ch.* 540, *cf. Neander's Ch. His.* I., 192,) and still we confront such facts as that Polycarp, a disciple of John, was bishop of Smyrna, Ignatius of Antioch, and Clement, supposed to have been Paul's fellow-laborer, mentioned in Phil. IV: 3, of Rome. The author of Hermas the Shepherd, unquestionably one of the earliest of the post-apostolic Christian writers, also makes the following distinctions:

"Hear now with reference to the stones which are in the building. Those square, white stones which fitted exactly into each other, are apostles, bishops, teachers and deacons who have lived in godly purity, and have acted as bishops and teachers and deacons chastely and reverently toward the elect of God." (*Apos. Fathers, p.* 336, *Vis.* 3, *chap.* 5).

"It is therefore certain," says Neander, of apostolic times, "that every church was governed by a union of the elders or overseers chosen from among themselves, and we find among them no individual distinguished above the rest who presided as a *primus inter pares;* though probably in the age immediately succeeding the apostolic, of which we have unfortunately so few authentic memorials, the practice was introduced of applying to such an one the name of *episcopos* by way of distinction." (*Pl. and Tr. I.*, 145). Elsewhere he says the distinction may be observed "all along to the end of the second century. It is hence that Ireneus" (*Bishop of Lyons, A. D.* 177, *sq.*) "sometimes uses the names bishop and presbyter as wholly synonymous, and at others distinguishes the bishops as presiding

officers from the presbyters. Tertullian (latter part of second century) also calls the presiding officers of the Christian communities by the common name *seniores*, including under this title both bishops and presbyters; though elsewhere in the writings of this father the distinction between bishops and presbyters is decidedly drawn." (*Ch. His. I.*, 192, *cf. Miller on Chr. Min.*, *p* 179).

The testimony of Mosheim, already produced, may be quoted as equally explicit.

"It appears incontestible," he says, "from the most authentic records and the best histories of this century, (the third), that in the large cities there was at the head of each church a person to whom was given the title of *bishop*, who ruled this sacred community with a certain sort of authority, in concert, however, with the body of presbyters, and consulting, in matters of moment, the opinions and the voices of the whole assembly." (*Eccl. His.*, *Pt. II.*, *chap.* II, 1).

Dr. Schaff concedes that in the second century this system of offices existed "throughout the whole church, east and west, and was unresistingly acknowledged, nay, universally regarded as at least indirectly of divine appointment." (*His. Apos. Ch.* 541). For further evidence see our advocacy of the three-office theory, p. 188.

We repeat, then, it is useless to deny that a distinction between bishop and elder prevailed in the early post-apostolic churches similar to that we have drawn between teacher and elder. And that the origin of this distinction was the teacher arising from among the

elders and retaining his title of elder, we think there can be no reasonable doubt. The tendency to this result would be facilitated by the term teacher being applied to both evangelist-teachers and pastor-teachers, and there is not wanting some positive evidence of the fact. Thus, Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna, was called "the illustrious teacher," and "the teacher of Asia," which is in perfect harmony with the practice of still calling Philip a deacon, though he became an evangelist, or calling Timothy an evangelist, in the modern sense of the term, when, as we have shown, he became a teacher. (*Apos. Faths., p.* 94, *Let. of the Ch. of Smyrna, on the Martyrdom of Polycarp.*)

Without then approving of a single extra-scriptural function which may have been attributed, in the process of change, to either bishops or presbyters, and conceding that, strictly speaking, there was in the eldership no such original distinction as that of *primus inter pares*, we conclude that the teacher himself, whether called teacher or bishop, is a veritable *primus inter pares*, and of scriptural right ought to be. Caution against repeating the errors and extravagances of the past in the matter of church government is well; but it is not well, in order to this, to deny divinely introduced distinctions. Doing this, we go to an opposite extreme scarcely less hurtful. The tyranny of an unregulated democracy may be as detrimental to the cause of a pure Christianity as that of a concentrated monarchism, and its faction breeding tendency well nigh as hurtful as a death-like stability which ultimates in the extinction of all spiritual life. God's

plan of officering and conducting his church is a guard against both dangers, leaving in the people's hands the authority necessary to their own development as well as to the best decision of important questions, but regulating their use of that authority by a division of deliberations so as to guard against inconsiderateness and factions.

SECTION V.—RECAPITULATION.

We may state our conclusions thus far then as follows:

1. The government of the church is democratic, ultimate authority resting in the people.

2. That democracy, however, is not an unregulated one, but is to be conducted according to our second method, which divides deliberations between a senate of elders, of which the teacher, if there be one, is president, and an assembly.

3. The fully officered church has a teacher or doctor, a board of elders, and another of deacons whose functions are yet to be considered.

4. A church wanting the teacher is however competent to attend to all the services of God's house under the lead of the elders, abating only the higher forms of teaching.

5. The teacher stands related to the elders as a *primus inter pares*, if he be ranked or denominated an elder or bishop, as a superior officer, if he be distinguished according to the apostolic schedule.

6. The elders are originally equal in rank, but may have to introduce some distinctions harmonious with differences of gifts to meet the exigencies of duty.

CHAPTER V.

OFFICERS CÓNTINUED.—DEACONS.

CURRENT and scriptural usages of terms are often at variance with each other. The term *minister* has with us an almost exclusively technical sense, which one could no more run through the Scriptures than he could run a railroad through the Alps. In the Scriptures it is the rendering of three radically different words, and covers a much larger number of uses. One of those terms is *διάκονος*, (deacon), which, with its cognates, occurs no less than ninety-nine (99) times in the New Testament, viz: *διακονία* thirty-three (33) times; *διάκονος* thirty (30) times, and *διακονεῖν* thirty-six (36) times. The varied uses of these terms may be seen by a few references:

"Then the king said to the *attendants:* Bind him hand and foot, &c.," (*Matt.* XXII: 13). "Martha was cumbered with much *serving*," (*Luke* X: 40). "For he (the civil ruler) is God's *minister* to thee for good,' (*Rom.* XIII: 4). "It is no great thing if also his (Satan's) *ministers* transform themselves as ministers of righteousness," (2 *Cor.* XI: 15). "He (Judas Iscariot) was numbered with us and obtained the office of this *ministry*," (*Acts* I: 17). "And gave to us the *ministry* of reconciliation," (2 *Cor.* V: 18). "I commend to you Phebe, our sister, who is a *deaconess* of the church

which is at Cenchrea," (*Rom.* XVI: 1). "The saints which are at Philippi with the overseers and *deacons*," (*Phil.* I: 1). "Is then Christ a *minister* of sin?" (*Gal.* II: 17). The simple idea underlying all these uses is *service* or *the aid of a servant.*

The second word rendered *minister* is ὑπηρέτης, which literally means *a common sailor* as distinguished from an officer. It is used of a servant of a synagogue whose business it was to hand the book to the reader and return it to its place, (*Luke* IV: 20), of such under officers as the chief priests and Pharisees sent to arrest Jesus, (*John* VII: 32, 45), of the ministers of Christ, (1 *Cor.* IV: 1), and of John Mark, the minister or assistant of Paul and Barnabas, (*Acts* XIII: 5).

The third word rendered *minister* is λειτουργός from which comes our word *liturgy*, and which primarily designated such rotary public service as the wealthier citizens of Athens rendered the State at their own expense. Thence it comes to cover any kind of public service. In the New Testament it appears to be used in the general sense, though with a leaning towards priestly and gratuitous service. It is used of Zachariah, who "executed the priest's office before God in the order of his course," (*Luke* I: 8, 23), of civil rulers, (*Rom.* XIII: 6), of Epaphroditus, a minister to Paul on the behalf of the kind hearted Philippians, (*Phil.* II: 25), and of Paul himself "ministering as a priest in the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles may be acceptable," (*Rom.* XV: 16), as though in the rotation of God's eternal ministries his time had come to officiate in laying the Gentiles upon the altar of Christ.

Thus it will be seen that the term *minister* covers an immensely larger field in scriptural than in present popular usage. And the same is true of the term *deacon*. In five instances only out of the thirty uses of the term itself, or the ninety-nine uses of it and its cognates, is there a clear and decided reference to the church officer called deacon. These facts have probably had their influence in leading some to doubt whether there was intended to be in the church a permanent deacon's office, and others who do not doubt this to obliterate some of the distinctions intended to be preserved between this and other ministerial offices. But we think neither conclusion is well taken. The use of a common term like *minister*, to cover various kinds of service, no more proves that the preacher and deacon are one in the general tenor of their duties than it proves that the preacher and the civil ambassador are one. Nor does the paucity of references to deacon in an official sense any more prove that there was no such permanent officer intended for the church than the infrequent use of elder or *older* in a technical sense proves that there was no such church officer as elder provided by the head of the church. The truth is, that most of our official titles, or designations, are first general and then official terms. Take *doctor* for an example. A single well attested use of a term as an office name is sufficient to establish the existence of the office; and a single allusion to that office might clearly indicate the intention to make it permanent. As respects the office of deacon, the five references alluded to are unquestionable, and their being made in

the very latest of the *epistles*, more than thirty years after Pentecost when the office is supposed to have originated, together with the general direction given, is a pretty clear indication that it was intended to continue permanently in the churches. We judge, moreover, that there is the same need of the office in all periods of church history, since work and wants are substantially the same. Assuming then that it was intended to be a permanent church office, we may study it best, perhaps, by attending first to its origin.

Section I.—Origin of the Office.

This is commonly sought in Acts VI., 1–6, though it must be confessed that it is a little remarkable that the office there has no technical designation. The nearest approach to the term *deacon* (διάκονος) is found in the expressions "daily *ministering*" (διακονία), "*serve* tables" (διακονεῖν), and "*ministry* of the word" (διακονία), expressions which, if we had the idea of growth in mind as we have developed it in our introduction, might possibly suggest that a permanent office was being instituted, but come short, it must be confessed, of positive proof.

The want of the positive in the case, associated with some other considerations, has led some to seek the origin farther back in the history of the church. They think the seven appointed to "serve tables" on account of the murmuring of the Grecian against the Hebrew or Palestinian Jews, were an addition to a number previously appointed; and that there had been a previous appointment they think quite probable

from the previous needs of the church, not only in caring for the poor, but also in the administration of ordinances. They also think they find an intimation of this in the previous chapter where (Vs. 6, 10) certain persons called "young men" (νεώτεροι) bore out of the assembly the bodies of Ananias and Sapphira. They suppose these to have been officers to whom such duties belonged, and that their name "young men" was given to distinguish them from the other class of officers called presbyters or eldermen.

For confirmation they appeal to other passages where a contrast, at least between ages, is actually drawn; for example, 1 Pet. v: 5, where, after addressing official elders, the apostle says: "In like manner ye younger, submit yourselves to the elder." (*Cf. Luke* XXII: 26; 1 *Tim.* V: 1, 2; *Tit.* II: 4, 6).

But to us this reasoning is not conclusive. We see no evidence but this assumption that deacons were ever distinguished from presbyters by their age. Nor do we see any evidence that "young men" is an official designation. Still farther, we see no gain in any direction from adopting the theory. We prefer, therefore, to find the origin of the deacon's office in the occasion referred to in Acts VI: 1, sq, which, though it leave us in somewhat of darkness, is quite harmonious in this respect with all that is revealed about the origin of the higher office of elders.

This occasion, which occurred soon after Pentecost, when thousands of converts of differing tongues and residences were still in Jerusalem, was the murmuring of the Grecian Jews alluded to, because, as they

thought, "their widows were neglected in the daily ministration" of supplies. To appease the complainants, as also to ease themselves of too heavy a burden, the apostles directed the multitude of the disciples to look out among them seven men of good repute, full of the Holy Spirit, whom they might appoint to the superintendency of the matter. They acted accordingly, and with some reference to social affiliations, probably, as the Grecian names of the seven may indicate. Those chosen are subsequently referred to as "the seven" (*Acts* XXI:8), farther than which reference the Scriptures give us no light upon them save in the case of Philip and Stephen, and upon them none as deacons. The form of reference, however, may suggest permanency of office, especially when considered in connection with the form of consecration used, which was prayer and imposition of hands, as in other cases of ordination to office work.

SECTION II.—QUALIFICATIONS OF DEACONS.

(*a.*) *Spirituality.*

At the head of qualifications stands spirituality, or, to use the description of the seven, "full of the Holy Spirit." How full of the Spirit Philip and Stephen were, we can judge from their subsequent history,—Philip going abroad as a herald of the gospel, training his family in a godly manner (*Acts* XXI: 9), and hospitably entertaining God's servants, while Stephen heroically defends his Saviour against his traducers, and perishes under a shower of stones, his face as

radiant as an angel's. According to 1 Tim. III: 9, all deacons were to hold "the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience," which could hardly be done without much communion with Christ in his word and in prayer, the grand requisites to eminent spirituality.

(*b.*) *Good Reputation.*

They are to be "of good repute" (*Acts* VI: 3), "without reproach" (1 *Tim.* III: 10). Respect appears to be had to moral and business standing particularly, as is indicated by the descriptive appellations "grave, not double tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of gain" (1 *Tim.* III: 8), "full of wisdom" to manage "business" (*Acts* VI: 3). The things specified give any business man a good reputation; their want, or the prevalence of their opposites, frivolity, prevarication, intemperance, covetousness and indiscretion, ruin any reputation. The official business leaders of the church must be models of business integrity and skill. Thus they will teach by example as well as manage church temporalities well.

(*c.*) *Wisdom*

"The seven" were to be "full of wisdom" as well as of the Holy Spirit. By this we understand the kind of wisdom requisite to manage both the "daily distribution" and the men who might incline to murmur, that is, business discretion and skill. And correspondent to this 1 Tim. III: 8, 12 requires *gravity* which is usually an indication of good sense, and *family con-*

trol which is likewise one of its best indications. Evidently every church which has any secularities to manage needs this kind of wisdom. And evidently again, such wisdom is as acceptable an offering to God as any that his people can make.

(*d.*) *Family Control.*

Deacons are to be the husbands of one, that is, of but one wife, not polygamists nor even bigamists, and are to preside well "over their children and their own homes," that is, all their family dependents, (1 *Tim.* III: 12). Ability to manage a family well is presumptive of ability to manage others well; while the want of moral support in the family, and especially in a bosom companion, would greatly impede any one's usefulness. Moreover, an example of unlawful marriage in a church official would be especially hurtful in its influence upon others. Be the man himself then what he may, the church and the cause he seeks to promote must not suffer from drawbacks in his social affiliations, or from such weakness as would be evinced by an inability properly to order his own house. Other and minor qualifications might be named, but all of those specified in the word are perhaps sufficiently embodied in these.

SECTION III.—FUNCTIONS.

(*a.*) *Not Spiritual.*

Ignatius, one of the apostolic fathers, wrote, or is fraudulently represented as having written, calling deacons "ministers of the mysteries of Jesus Christ,"

and saying, "let all reverence the deacons as an appointment of Jesus Christ, and the bishop as Jesus Christ, who is the Son of the Father, and the presbyters as the Sanhedrim of God and assembly of the apostles," (*Ep. to Trallians, Cp.* 2, 3).

He represents, and in his corrupted form leads, a movement to which those who adopt the Episcopal form of church government are very generally inclined,—a movement which distorts the functions of all church officers, as in the above quotation, making them different orders of a priesthood like the Jewish, of which the deacons are one.

Hence Dr. Doran, in Kitto's Cyclopedia, argues that the duties of deacons were not entirely temporal, because Philip and Stephen both preached, and one of them, at least, baptized, while he thinks it quite strange that the council of Constantinople in Trullo should declare that the seven deacons had no spiritual functions assigned them.

But surely no bishop ought to assume an equal rank with the Lord Jesus, and no elder with an apostle. Hence no deacon ought to assume a correspondingly high elevation. Neither bishops, elders nor deacons are priests in the proper sense of the term, Jesus Christ "now *once* in the end of the ages" having "been manifested for the putting away of sin by the sacrifice of himself," and consequently there being no need of repeated sacrifices, either by himself or others. Nor do we find any scriptural indications that the deacon's was a preaching, ruling or ministerial office in the common acceptation of those terms.

If Philip and Stephen both preached and baptized, it does not follow that they did either as deacons, for Philip was an evangelist as well as a deacon, (*Acts* XXI: 8), and possibly also Stephen. It is not uncommon for different offices to meet in the same person. Hence Peter, the apostle, calls himself "a fellow elder." Paul was "an apostle, a preacher and a teacher," and Timothy was both evangelist and teacher. There is, of course, no objection to deacons preaching if they have the gift, for it were devoutly to be desired that all the Lord's servants were prophets, but it would, we think, be a sad perversion to make their office-work preaching. Not only is there no indication of any such purpose in the qualifications required and in the original purpose of their appointment, but it is incompatible with Paul's schedules of spiritual gifts and church offices, if we are to understand the deacon's office to be referred to under the designation *helps*. This is contrasted with and not included in the teaching or preaching offices of 1 Cor. XII: 28, and is not even mentioned in Eph. IV: 11.

(*b.*) *Respect Temporalities.*

Their duties we understand to respect temporalities, or what may be called the secular side of church affairs. The original appointment respected, not the souls but the bodies of men. Their qualifications as originally enumerated also look in the same direction, good reputation and wisdom, as already suggested, undoubtedly referring to their skill in business affairs. And that their duties take a wider range than simply

attention to the poor, is evident from the continuation of the office after the special demand which created it had passed away, as also from the character of the apostolic helpers. Moreover, the reason assigned for their appointment—that the apostles might give themselves wholly to the ministry of the word—not only suggests that their office-work was not the ministry of the word, but is as pertinent to other temporalities as to serving tables. We therefore conclude that the deacons are to have especial charge of whatever may be denominated the temporalities of the church, the work now very commonly assigned to trustees, ushers and sextons. They are the helpers of the teachers and elders, whose especial province is the spiritualities of the church, though their oversight extends to temporalities as well. They thus complete a natural division of church labor, and make the theory of church organization as simple as it was originally effective. "The word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly," we doubt not would be the record of many another church than the first, were this simple division of responsibilities and toils properly respected.

(*c.*) *Historical Testimony.*

But on this last point we will enlarge somewhat after we shall have adduced a little historical testimony in favor of the main view we have presented as to functions. The so-called Apostolical Canons which, however far from apostolical origin, doubtless reflect the views entertained at a very early age, ordained,

"That the bishop shall have authority over the funds of the church. For if men's precious souls may be committed to him, much more ought he to be entrusted with money; so that he may manage all things according to his privilège; and in the fear of God, and with all piety may supply the needy *through the presbyters and deacons.*" (*Canon XLI.*).

The actions of the councils of Nicæa (A. D. 325) and Antioch (A. D. 341), were in substantial accord with this canon. It is to be borne in mind, however, that at a very early day the funds of some churches were immense. "So ample were the funds of the church of Rome, about the middle of the second century," says Miller, "that they were adequate, not only to the support of her own clergy and poor members, but also to the relief of other churches, and of a great number of Christian captives in the several provinces, and of such as were condemned to the mines. Such was the wealth of the same church in the third century, that it was considered an object not unworthy of imperial rapacity." And the relation of the deacons to the care of this wealth may be seen in the fact that by order of the Emperor Decius, deacon Laurentius was seized with the hope of finding the treasures of the church in his possession, (*Miller's Chr. Ministry, p.* 234). Miller thus concludes: "Now the revenues of the church, whether great or small, were at the disposal of the bishop. The deacons executed their orders," (*p.* 235). He also quotes Hermas, one of the apostolic fathers, as saying that "of such as believed, some were set over inferior functions or

services, being entrusted with the poor and widows;" Origen as saying: "The deacons preside over the money tables of the church;" and again, "Those deacons who do not manage well the money of the church committed to their care, but act a fraudulent part, and dispense it, not according to justice, but for the purpose of enriching themselves; these act the part of money-changers and keepers of those tables which our Lord overturned. For deacons were appointed to preside over the tables of the church, as we are taught in the Acts of the Apostles;" Ambrose, of the fourth century: "Deacons do not publicly preach;" Chrysostom, of the same century: "The deacons had great need of wisdom, although the preaching of the gospel was not committed to them," and also, that "it is absurd to suppose that they should have the offices of preaching and taking care of the poor committed to them, seeing it is impossible for them to discharge both functions adequately," (*p.* 173, *sq*). Similar quotations might be made to great length. "A deacon does not bless," say the Apostolical Constitutions with reference to ordination, "does not give the blessing, but receives it from the bishop and presbyter; he does not baptize, he does not offer; but when a bishop or presbyter has offered, he distributes to the people, not as a priest, but as one that ministers to the priests." (*Book VIII., XXVIII.*).

According to the same authority, the deacon was to wait upon candidates at baptism, (*Book III., XVI.*), and to seat and preserve the assembly in order. His relation to the other officers of the church is thus pic-

tured: "When thou (the bishop) callest an assembly of the church as one that is the commander of a great ship, appoint the assemblies to be made with all possible skill, charging the deacons as mariners to prepare places for the brethren as for passengers, with all due care and decency. And first, let the building be long, with its head to the east, with its vestries on both sides at the east end, and so it will be like a ship. In the middle let the bishop's throne be placed, and on each side of him let the presbytery sit down; and let the deacons stand near at hand, in close and small girt garments, for they are like the mariners and managers of the ship," (*Book II., LVII.*). These views which make the deacon's office to concern temporalities, are supported by Calvin, and modern Presbyterian, Congregational and Baptist writers. Calvin says:

"Scripture specially gives the name of deacons to those whom the church appoints to dispense alms and take care of the poor, constituting them as it were stewards of the public treasury of the poor," (*Institutes* II., 322). Again he says: "Nor was the care of the deacons then (fourth century) different from what it had been under the apostles. For they received the daily offerings of the faithful, and the annual revenues of the church, that they might apply them to their true uses; in other words, partly in maintaining ministers and partly in supporting the poor; at the sight of the bishop, however, to whom they every year gave an account of their stewardship," (*p.* 330). He reprobates the idea that the office is a preaching office.

The Presbyterian church of the United States makes it "the business of the deacons to take care of the poor, and to distribute among them the collections which may be raised for their use. To them, also, may be properly committed the management of the temporal affairs of the church." (*Form of Gov. Cp. VI.*). Of the Congregationalists, Punchard says: "Our churches have judged it to be proper to commit to deacons the care of their funds, if any they chance to have, and their pecuniary matters generally." (*Views of Con.* 94). "They are placed," says Howell, a Baptist, "over all the temporalities of the church." "Their duty," says Prof. Harvey of the Hamilton Theological Seminary, "is to administer the temporary affairs of the church, such as the relief of the poor, the support of public worship, and the means for the due administration of the ordinances." We thus see that apart from the priestly proclivities of the Romish and some other communions, there is a very general concurrence of opinion as to the deacon's office pertaining to temporalities rather than spiritualities.

Section IV.—Unfortunate Complications.

While, however, the scope of the deacon's work would seem to be sufficiently clear, it is now unfortunately complicated with that of other officials and those unknown to the New Testament, so that practically the office amounts to very little or is sadly perverted. We allude especially to its complication with the functions of trustees, officers created by the State rather than by the word of God. They being the legal represent-

atives of the church-society and holding the property of the church in the eyes of the law, very naturally absorb the financial or chief work of the deacons, leaving them little to do in churches of habits such as now prevail among Protestants, or forcing them into spheres not properly their own if they find official occupation. The results are unfavorable in a variety of ways. The work of the churches is so complicated that not one member in twenty can unravel it, and the whole scheme of offices is marred, while work is but poorly done. Deacons become practically elders in some cases so far as they are anything, and yet only a miserable substitute, since no one can tolerate a deacon eldership in full; the trustees become deacons, though generally without their qualifications of spirituality and consecrated business talent; and the elders with their very important work go to the wall. An infringement upon one part of the revealed scheme infringes upon the whole, and gives us deformity for beauty, confusion for order, and weakness and inefficiency for strength and corresponding increase of the word of God. These things ought not to be so. The office of trustees ought to be abolished, and the office of deacons allowed to have its proper functions, and thus give a legitimate place to the office of elder now so commonly wanting in the independent churches.

Section V.—Skilled Labor.

Still farther, skilled labor which is so highly prized in secular life ought to be as highly prized in the church of Christ. The Saviour appeared to recognize

its value, when he said: "The children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light." And certainly both the Holy Spirit and the apostle recognized it, when they laid such emphasis upon the "best gifts." But we imagine there are very few churches who have allowed their offices to be confused, perverted and destroyed in the manner just alluded to, who are not suffering amazingly for the want of skilled labor in both the spiritual and temporal spheres of their work. It is one of the most common things in the world for the same identical men to manage church work in a slip-shod, hit-or-miss way, while their personal affairs move like clock-work. In some mysterious manner men become unaccountably indifferent and touchy, as contradictory as those terms appear to be, or else lose their senses entirely, when they enter a church business sphere. They can emphasize order elsewhere, and be perfectly content with the greatest disorder here. They can be as parliamentary as lords or senators in other assemblies, and as unparliamentary as boors in a church meeting. They can take broad and comprehensive views of the affairs of a corporation or State, and most miserably narrow ones of church work. They can work like artists in other spheres, while they handle any church work assigned like bunglers. What is wanted is skilled labor, which results from study and practice, and is predicated upon adapted gifts. But skilled labor on the part of church officials cannot be had while their functions are in confusion in all minds. They must know their sphere and duties, and be able to study both in the light of the

Word and reason. A deacon who has no definite idea of duty, or only a mistaken one, must of necessity be a comparatively forceless man. He may be "as sober as deacon," and differ little officially from a dead man. Few would deny the utility of skilled labor in the pulpit, but alas! how many are utterly unconscious of its need as an adjunct to the pulpit, in both the spiritual and temporal spheres of church activity. A little awakening has shown itself of late in the direction of colleges for the preparation of lay preachers, and Sunday school institutes for Sunday school teachers, but when will the time come provided evidently in the Saviour's scheme of church offices, when church boards of elders and deacons shall be schools for the production of skilled labor in those who ought to be the great church leaders!

Section VI.—Things Faultily Done.

But many things need thorough and business-like attention, as we conceive, which now go by default entirely and in doing so bring the Christian church greatly into reproach.

Care of the Poor.

"The poor ye have with you always," said the Saviour, "and when ye will ye may do them good." If by the poor we mean common beggars, or those rendered poor by their own vices or indiscretion, it may be said the churches of our country have very few to care for. But if we mean, beside those who are usually denominated the poor, our superannuated preachers,

our widows and orphans, no civilization has yet become so perfect as to render the Saviour's statement untrue or inapplicable. But when do independent churches will to do them good? How many homes have they to-day for such in all the land? Thousands of our ministers who give their lives to the service of Christ are compelled either to turn attention from their ministerial labors to serve their own tables or to look forward to a cheerless future. And not a few, unable to succeed to their satisfaction in the ministry while doing the former, and unable to continue in it while doing the latter, abandon the ministry altogether. If the amount of suffering from poverty in this line could be told, it would, no doubt, astonish us. The widows of deceased ministers, to say nothing of others equally deserving and needy, and the suffering orphans of brethren beloved, are to-day an uncared-for host in the land. Their cries go up into the ears of the Lord of Hosts, but fail to awaken the attention of the churches which should as regularly provide for them as their members provide for their own dear households. As the result to the children, not a few are cast upon the tender mercies of an unbelieving world, to turn out foes to the cause their parents loved and served. As the result to the churches themselves, benevolence or humanitarian feeling is shriveled, and the Christian activities of all concerned shriveled, of course, along with it. As the result to unbelievers, they say, "What more do Christians than others?" and cherish their unbelief.

These things ought not to be so. The best talent of the churches is none too good to consecrate to the abatement of these evils. And the abatement comes entirely within the scope of the deacons' work—the deacons of the various associated churches in an united capacity. But what deacon in the land ever thought of such a thing as a part of his official duty? Aye, worse than this, what deacon of no more than ordinary capacity could be expected to think of it when an over-shadowing board of trustees has taken all inspiration from him as a church official?

Burial of the Dead.

Another evil which has often brought the blush of shame to the writer's cheek, is the utter want of appropriate official care for the burial of the believing dead. "Devout men carried Stephen to his burial," as doubtless they did other members of the first church at Jerusalem, our model church. But undevout and even the most ungodly men carry our modern church members to their burial as often as otherwise. At least there is an almost universal neglect of any systematic or official attention to this most important and tender Christian duty. The members of the church grow up to be utterly thoughtless of propriety in the case, and the ministers, if thoughtful, are generally too late to control arrangements. The writer has followed to the grave a deacon who had faithfully served the church of which he was a member for more than thirty years, the church, as such, giving him no more recognition than as though he were a heathen man and a

publican. Such things make one's blood almost boil in his veins, if he be a man of any sense of propriety. They seem to say, that, after all, our church members have failed to learn the lessons of common civility or respect. But these things will probably have to be endured until the deacon's office means something more than it does now. Men must be in the condition to think and devise before they can be expected to mend such matters very materially. It does seem, to be sure, as though as many as one of all the deacons of the land might have canvassed his official duties far enough to have rescued his office from its present inefficiency as respects the burial of the dead. But custom, good or bad, is a ruler of tremendous power.

Architecture and Finance.

Again, deacons are the natural persons to perfect systems of church finance and architecture. Almost every congregation in the land suffers from illy ventilated rooms as often as they assemble for worship, if they do not also from rooms illy arranged for their church work. The centuries have rolled by, and the problem, how to construct a meeting house for Protestants or how to ventilate it, is practically unsolved. Nothing is settled and commonly available. The same is true of the management of finances. Annually, or oftener, the churches strike some snag of difficulty. Nothing can be said to be settled as to the management of either current expenses or benevolent operations. All is experimental, this minister suggesting one thing and that another, while this church does something, and that

comparatively nothing. And we cannot resist the conviction that this state of things is largely the result of the present confusion relative to church offices. Trustees elected annually and many of them not church men, could hardly be expected to devote any great amount of time to the solution of problems they are so soon to be relieved of. Circumstances forbid their acquiring much skill in the needed direction. The case demands men "full of the Holy Spirit and of wisdom," who shall be kept face to face with these evils long enough to both feel their force and devise the remedy. Deacons ought long before now to have settled both questions. But if they ever do settle them, they will probably be selected with reference to something besides tameness or forcelessness of character, and will have official room for the use of other qualifications.

Section VII.—By the Body to the Soul.

We return now to the grand result to which all church arrangements look, or which they are intended to conserve, the increase of the Word of God as in the case of the first church at Jerusalem. If we suppose the board of elders of which we find subsequent mention to have been appointed as soon as were the deacons, we find a church fully organized and equipped for work, one class of officers in addition to the apostles given to the spiritual part of its work and another to the temporal, all thus conspiring to give the Word its greatest reach and potency. The Holy Spirit's power to sanctify both business and worship was thus illus-

trated, and the unrighteous mammon forced to yield his iron neck to the yoke of Jesus. And thus it should be now. The great official essentials of churchhood are of inspired origin and ever the same. While teachers and elders should be engaged with might and main in disseminating the Word and ministering to the souls of men, deacons should be models of business integrity and skill, preceding or following, as the case may be, in their equally earnest and scarcely less important ministrations to their bodies. Christ's redemption, like his personal ministry, respects the whole man. And so will ours when most effective. The enemy is thus flanked on both sides or assailed in front and rear. No greater mistake can be made than to suppose spiritual interests can thrive apart from temporal or physical. The soul is as often reached through the body as is the body through the soul. Both are addressed in the Word, and when both are correspondingly addressed in our church methods the Word will increase most mightily, we doubt not. What is the astonishing temperance crusade now sweeping the land like a wild fire but Heaven's emphasis upon the bodies of men as related to soul welfare! Christ's deacons, when full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom and properly engaged in their official work, are but Christ in his present form of incarnation in his church, which is his body, reaching out after the bodies of men that so he may reach their souls. How important their mission, then, as related to the prevalence of the Word! Well was it said, "They that have served well as deacons obtain for themselves a good degree and great boldness in the

faith which is in Christ Jesus." They as effectually serve God as any of His servants, only in a method suited to their personal gifts. Good care of the house of God is next to the sermon in importance. Good models of business talent consecrated are of first consequence to the influence of the Word upon business men. They would stand in times of general business corruption such as our country has experienced of late, like the beetling cliffs to the assaulting waves of ocean. Good care of church finances is often the salvation of the whole body from moral ruin and ministerial bankruptcy. As spiritual gifts in some sense plant themselves upon the physical man for standing ground, so church dispensation of the word plants itself upon deacons for some of its main conditions of efficiency.

SECTION VIII.—DEACONESSES.

Having referred to deaconesses in the course of our discussion, it will be advisable, perhaps, to add a word concerning them especially. That there was such an office in apostolic times there is no room to doubt. Some suppose that Paul alludes to it when, in 1 Tim. III: 11, speaking of deacons, he adds: "Their wives (literally, not their *wives*, nor even *their*, but simply *women*), in like manner, must be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things;" also in Tit. II: 3, where, in contrast with "aged men," (literally presbyters), he says "that aged women (literally female presbyters), likewise (must) be in behavior as becomes holiness, not false accusers, not enslaved to much wine, teachers of that which is

good." But however this may be, Phebe was a deaconess of the church of Cenchrea, as Paul informs us in Rom. XVI: 1; and history informs us that the order was continued in the Eastern or Greek church until the twelfth century, and was not entirely abolished in the Western or Latin until the tenth, though some councils set it aside as early as the fourth. The special need for the office was probably found in the customs of society in the east, which restricted intercourse between the sexes far beyond what is customary with us, and hence rendered the need of female helpers more imperative. This restriction pertained, not only to the synagogue, where the sexes sat apart, but also to the household and the street, where separation or veiling was also thought to be expedient.

And the need was all the greater in times of persecution, when females as well as males were thrown into public prisons, where they needed the kind attentions of the church.

The early post-apostolic churches were very particular as to the qualifications of incumbents of the office. They must, first, be widows; second, widows who were mothers; and, third, must not have been twice married. These restrictions had reference to their faithfulness and ability to do the work of sympathy and love which was expected of them. They assisted at baptisms, instructed catechumens, visited families and prisons, stood at the entrance of the churches to direct women to their proper places, &c., (*Kitto's Cyc.*). Whether the office should be continued depends, perhaps, upon the sense of need. Certainly its continu-

ance is not forbidden, although, not being distinctly coupled in the later epistles with those of elders and deacons, it may not be thought to be obligatory. We may too easily conclude that gifts and offices have ceased in the church because our faith has ceased to grasp them. It is often said that the day of miracles is passed, including gifts of healing, prophecy, &c., and perhaps it has, but we nowhere read that it was to cease. The force of custom or preconceived opinion is only second to that of divine statutes everywhere. We should say, therefore, that if any church finds work for an order of deaconesses, it is perfectly justified in instituting it. We may even doubt whether it will attain to the highest force of church organization until it does institute it. Certainly woman has an immense sphere of usefulness among her own sex, and her talents should be cultivated for that field. And in order to this they must be singled out and emphasized as well as directed.

CHAPTER VI.

DOCTRINES.

Section 1.—The Real Question.

WHAT doctrines ought to be believed by professing Christians, and what are essential or indispensable to the New Testament church constitution, are two very different questions. The first has respect to doctrinal theology, and the second to doctrinal ecclesiology; the one to what God has taught in general, the other to what he has made a part of the fundamental or organic law of a particular institution. Evidently many things ought to be included in the former, which ought not to be included in the latter, the church constitution being intended to include only such doctrines as must be received in order to membership, and not with them such as may be attainable or comprehensible only by the saints in their higher degrees of knowledge.

It is with the second of these questions we have to do in our present discussion: What *must* be believed in order to churchhood.

The emphatic propriety of the question is apparent upon its mere statement, we imagine, for it is incredible that the institution which by virtue of what it embodies in itself is "the pillar and ground of the truth," should embody nothing tangible and definite. Moreover, it is

incredible that its Divine Head, who placed such emphasis upon sanctification through the truth should be indifferent as to whether his "body," through which the work was to be carried forward, and which was itself to become the chief embodiment of results, being without "spot or wrinkle, or any such thing," should be of a definite doctrinal constitution. And again, even if such a monstrosity of indifference were possible, such a monstrosity of results as sweet water from a bitter fountain would not be possible, as it would set at defiance the most fundamental law of nature.

Section II.—Novelty of the Question.

The propriety of the question then being so apparent, what was our astonishment at being able to find not the slightest trace of discussion or even inquiry upon the subject from the time of the apostles to the present. We are confident it has never been made prominent, and have no evidence that it has been even mooted. The reason is obvious to the surveyor of history. Investigation independent of all suggestions from circumstances seldom if ever occurs. Now the fact is with reference to the church that, while circumstances have pressed other questions in abundance upon the religious mind, they have not until now pressed this one. In the earliest period of church history, the apostolic church constitution was worked rather than studied, for the reason that in the double contest with Judaism and Paganism other phases of Christianity absorbed all thought. With reference to

Paganism, Apologetics was the all absorbing department of work. Hence, to quote the words of Hagenbach, "No exact definitions concerning the nature of the church are found previous to the time of Cyprian," in the third century. (*His. of Doct's.*, I., 193). "The general character of the period," according to Rothe, "is that of abstract indefiniteness. What the theologians say concerning the nature of the church is so frequently void of clearness and precision, that it is almost impossible fully to ascertain their real sentiments." (*do.* I, 194). From the time of Cyprian onward to the Reformation of the sixteenth century, the Romish idea of one Catholic or universal church held sway, under which it was logically impracticable to raise such a question respecting the local or individual church which it ignored as a distinct organism, and the points of contact with which on the part of reformers never suggested it, they generally respecting purity of the Christian life, discipline, form of government or doctrinal theology rather than doctrinal ecclesiology. From the time of Luther onward to the present, the idea of a universal invisible church has been uppermost in the Protestant mind, a church having no organized existence, and therefore tolerating no such question as we are considering. Its conflict with the Romish universal church is that of life against form. Even those who have emphasized the local church idea have not hitherto raised this question, for the reason that theology or church government has been the great matter of interest. We pass by all the confessions of faith issued during the two great periods of symbolism, the

fourth and fifth centuries, and the sixteenth and seventeenth, without finding the subject touched, so far as we know. Other special topics or doctrinal theology as a whole has filled the range of vision. It is left for our time, when the very existence of a definite visible church is called in question, to tell just what its constitution, doctrinally considered, must be.

Section III.—What the Answer Involves.

Assuming as we have, then, that the New Testament does provide a constitution for a veritable and specific institution named a church, we will now venture an answer to our question. And that answer we shall draw solely from the New Testament, the only authority in the case. If we are not very much mistaken it is very explicit.

In the fourth chapter of that emphatically ecclesiological epistle, the Epistle of Paul to the church of Ephesus, that great church builder and doctrinal apostle exhorts them "to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace," assuming in the form of the expression that they represented such a unity, and then proceeding at once to its analysis. According to that analysis it involves seven vital points, the perfect number. It is as follows:

"There is *one body* and *one Spirit*, even as ye were called in *one hope* of your calling; *one Lord*, *one faith*, *one immersion*, *one God and Father of all*, who is over all, and through all, and in all." (Verses 4, 6).

In these seven points then we understand him who has "the seven Spirits of God," "who holds the seven

stars in his right hand and who walks in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks," to reveal "the seven pillars of the house which wisdom hath builded," or, in other words, the doctrines essential to churchhood, that is, the narrowest scale of doctrines in which "the unity of the Spirit" as embodied in a church, or, as for that matter, any organization, can be expressed. We say the narrowest scale of doctrines because what the infallible Holy Spirit announces as the unity of the Spirit we may not abate by so much as one jot or tittle; and moreover only the narrowest scale is admissible in the church constitution, since the weakest and youngest disciple is to take his stand upon it as well as the oldest and profoundest, and it must of necessity, therefore, be graded to his capacity. But we may with equal propriety call it the broadest scale of doctrines or the only one in which the unity of the Spirit can be expressed, for while many other doctrines might be named, it would be found, we apprehend, that they all issue from these as streams issue from fountains or oaks from acorns. And this we think the apostle more than intimates in the context (verse 13), where he names another unity in contrast with this, "the unity of the faith." To this second unity the body of Christ, the church which from its natal hour represents or embodies "the unity of the Spirit," is expected to grow. In order to this the various orders of the ministry named in verse eleven (11) are given. It is put synonymously with "perfecting the saints," "building up the body of Christ," attaining "to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the full-

ness of Christ," and is the safeguard against being "tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, by cunning craftiness after the wily manner of error." The passage from the unity of the Spirit to the unity of the faith is indeed figured as the passage from childhood to manhood, the object of it being stated in these emphatic and wonderfully descriptive words—"that we may no longer be children." As respects subject matter, then, the unity of the Spirit stands related to the unity of the faith as the inborn powers or possibilities of childhood stand related to the highest development of manhood. The one is doctrine in its germs or fundamentals, the other is the same doctrine in its full development through the power of a sanctified ministry. The one is truth in the abstract, the other is truth in its logical and Scriptural deductions and applications. God must give us the essentials of the unity of the Spirit by direct revelation; those of the unity of the faith he may, in a measure, entrust our own powers to educe. The unity of the Spirit is, therefore, the broadest as well as the narrowest scale of Christian doctrine. It is fontal with respect to the unity of the faith, as God the maker of all things is fontal with respect to the universe. The labors of the past Christian centuries have been devoted almost exclusively to the evolution of the unity of the faith, though somewhat blindly so, for the reason that its proper relation to the seven essentials of the unity of the Spirit has not been ap-

prehended, and consequently the true standard of measurement has often been wanting.

Section IV.—The Unity of the Spirit, Church Unity.

If additional evidence were needed that this unity of the Spirit is church unity, the context furnishes it. Not only is a church addressed and assumed to possess this unity, but the church, which is Christ's body, is the very subject under consideration. In the chapter preceding (verse 10), the church appears as the honored agency through which the manifold wisdom of God is to be revealed to "the principalities and powers in the heavenly places," and, in its very last verse, as the exhaustless fountain of glory to God "throughout all ages, world without end." In the verses immediately following these we are considering, we have one of the two only formal schedules of church officers given in the New Testament, together with their mission to the body. (*Cf.* 1 *Cor.* xii: 28). Moreover the first chapter (verse 22) strikes the key note of our view by telling us that to Christ as "the *head of the church*" all things are to be subjected; while among the last verses of the Epistle (v: 25, *sq.*) give us the sweet and dying cadences of the song when they tell us how Christ loved his church and how spotless and pure he intends to make it.

If it be suggested that *the church universal* or *invisible* may be referred to, we reply that in the ordinary sense of those terms the New Testament knows no such church. (*Vide Pt. II.*). Besides, if it did, such

a church would have to be completely reformed before it could comply with the apostle's injunction, for no one pretends that it keeps or assumes to keep this unity of the Spirit in one baptism, many of its members never having had water applied in any way which was even called baptism. The nearest approach of the New Testament use of the term *church* to the church universal or invisible of writers upon church polity, is the collective use of the term, in which the members of all local churches are conceived to constitute one whole; and if it be said that it is this collective church to which the apostle refers, we will admit it for peace's sake, at the same time claiming that it makes no difference with our argument, since this great body is but a great sphere made out of many smaller ones, each having the three hundred and sixty degrees essential to sphericity, or each being "the fullness of him who filleth all" things, and all, therefore, having precisely the same doctrinal unity.

SECTION V.—WISDOM'S "SEVEN PILLARS."

Having established, then, th apostle's seven ones which constitute the unity of the Spirit as the church's constitution or organic law doctrinally considered, it remains for us to examine them with reference to what they involve, simply remarking in a prefaratory way that, in this scheme, Christ's inspired words are emphatically "spirit and life," as well as doctrine.

(a.) "One Body.

From the time of the Babel disruption the human family has ever been dividing itself into many bodies instead of consolidating, according to its original proposal, into one. There have been many tribes and nations, many religious bodies, many dismemberments of the one body of Christ and many crushing social or caste distinctions. This tendency to dismemberment the World's Redeemer proposed to arrest, and in its place substitute a counter tendency to solid union. In order to the execution of his proposal, he not only proclaimed a gospel of peace and good will to men, but also sent his Holy Spirit to regenerate the alienating souls of men, and of those who had thus been made one with God and one with each other constituted a new social organism which he calls his "body," and which is henceforth to be the social unit of all human unification. In two very important respects, then, did this body represent the work of unification: first in man's personal relations to God as a wandering sinner saved, and second, and as a consequence of the first, in his relations to his fellow-men. It was, therefore, highly proper that this twofold vital fact of the inward life embodied in this new organism, the church, should become a point of doctrine, a principle recognized and published for the guidance of all concerned.

Such we understand to be the intention in the scheme of doctrine we are considering. This practical fact or principle is placed in the very front of the

array as doctrine number one, a doctrine covering an experience whose double meaning this dismembered world would do well to study.

Harmonious with this interpretation is our context, as well as all other Scripture bearing upon the subject. In chapter three, verses 2–6, the mystery which "in other generations was not made known to the sons of men" is said to have been revealed through Christ's "holy apostles and prophets,"—"that (in the divine plan) the Gentiles are fellow-heirs, *and of the same body*, and partakers with us (Jews) of the promise, in Christ Jesus, through the gospel." In chapter two, verses 11–18, not only is the same spiritual unification of these long dismembered divisions of the human family affirmed, but the inward process is also given. The Gentiles who, not having been blessed with the oracles of God, were without Christ, aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world, and hence "afar off," are "made nigh by the blood of Christ." Thus both Jews and Gentiles, having common "access in one Spirit to the Father," and being mutually and individually "reconciled to God," are made "one body." The same inward process, together with its outward and symbolic expression, is again stated by the same apostle in his First Epistle to the Corinthians (XII: 13): "for by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether bond or free; and were all made to drink of one Spirit." Thus united, the common unhallowed distinctions of society together with

those extraordinary ones growing out of sex which have so disastrously prevailed in heathen lands, and even those of diverse gifts, which must be recognized in other views of the church, disappear and *in Christ Jesus* all become one.

Thus the "one body" appears to be a very comprehensive doctrine. It does not, however, comprehend everything which some minds may be tempted to include in it. It does not comprehend, (1), what is not literally in that institution which Christ calls his body, the church, which as we have shown, is either and only a local society, the ideal organism involved in local societies, or the general collection of such socities. If there are other persons, as there doubtless are many, who have an inward vital union with Christ, they do not come under the purview of the doctrine, not belonging to that organized society of which it is affirmed. (2), The doctrine does not imply an obliteration of the well known distinction in "gifts" which is found and Scripturally recognized in every church. The doctrine respects oneness in *Christ Jesus*, leaving many members and diverse gifts as it finds them. (3), The doctrine does not cover all that is requisite to the fulfilment of the Saviour's prayer that his people may be one, it being but one of seven points of doctrine essential to the unity of the Spirit, and but one of many points essential to the unity of the faith to which they are expected to grow.

(*b.*) "*One Spirit.*"

It may seem almost superfluous to say to the Christians of this day that this one Spirit is the Holy

Spirit, the Spirit of truth whom Christ sent into the world, that Spirit by whom alone we have access "to the Father" (III: 18). But it is not superfluous, certainly, to publish such a doctrine to a pagan nation whose demons are more numerous than its men. Nor can it appear superfluous to publish it to the misguided thousands who seek unto those "who have familiar spirits," vainly imagining that by some such spiritual intervention they can obtain a better access unto the Father, or at least to the invisible world of spirits. And, upon a little reflection, we think it will appear far from superfluous to remind professed Christians or those who may contemplate a union with the church of Christ, that there is but one Spirit who can give the desired access to God, and thus qualify for membership in the one body, for alas! how many tolerate the spirit of the world which works death in the stead of the Holy Spirit, and what multitudes are inducted by the wide-spread sacramental system of salvation into what is called the body of Christ without the slightest recognition of the possession of this one Spirit as the needful qualification!

It cannot be too emphatically stated that our access to God and our baptism into the one body are by the one Holy Spirit. The body is intended to be thoroughly spiritual here, and looks forward to a glorious future when its individual members, who now, as living spirits in dead bodies (*Rom.* VIII: 10), have a fearful struggle with the flesh, will greet a companionable and spiritual body arising from the dust of the natural (1 *Cor.* XV: 44). The second doctrine of

the Church of Christ, then, may well be that of the *one Spirit* who quickens the dead in sin, gives access to God, and an earnest of the future inheritance, illumines the sacred page, helps infirmity in prayer,—in short, who presides over and inspires the whole Christian life and is the vital power in the paradise of God.

(*c.*) "*One Hope.*"

It is as important to the Christian that his hope should be definite in its character as it is that but a single spirit should inspire him. If his aim be too low, his attainments in grace will be correspondingly meager. If it be unwarrantable, he may fail of his object entirely or be the subject of an unhappy conflict with the one Spirit who recognizes the propriety of the one hope.

Now, it is well known that hopes as to the future are multiform. The Mormon and the Mohammedan hope for a heaven of sensual delights. The Boodhist hopes for annihilation. The ancient Egyptian hoped that his transmigrating soul might, in time, return to reoccupy the body which had been so carefully embalmed and laid away in the pyramids for preservation from the destroying elements. The Tauist hopes against hope that he may gain such a mastery over flesh and spirit as to be ultimately pure. Many professed disciples of Jesus hope, they scarcely know for what, save exemption from pain and the possession of that vague thing, happiness.

> "O happiness, our being's end and aim,"

is their dreamy aspiration continually.

In contrast with all that is vague, inconsistent or multiform, revelation thrusts within the veil of the holy of holies a single hope as an anchor to the soul, and bids every eye in the church ship fasten upon it. What that is, Paul shall tell us: "For the hope of the resurrection of the dead I am now judged." (*Acts* XXIII: 6). And this is the nature of the resurrection: The body "is sown in corruption, it rises in incorruption. It is sown in dishonor, it rises in glory. It is sown in weakness, it rises in power. It is sown a natural body, it rises a spiritual body." (1 *Cor.* XV: 42–44). It will occur at our Lord's second coming, and hence "the blissful hope" and the "appearing of the glory of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ," (*Tit.* II: 13), are associated together. The resurrection, then, with its attendant glory and grand consummation of redemption in a spiritual body, is the one glorious hope of the church of Christ.

(*d.*) "*One Lord.*"

The common designations of the Christian are *disciple* and *servant*, both of which imply subjection to some higher authority than self. And most assuredly he who by all his searching cannot find out God and with all his power and wisdom cannot for a day safely cease to pray, "Give me this day my daily bread, and lead me not into temptation, but deliver me from evil," should be under the most rigid surveillance of a competent ruler and judge. Nor does he need him more in his private life than he does in the church, where temptations are so numerous to a newly enfranchised

citizen of Zion to use his "freedom for a vail of wickedness." (1 *Pet.* II: 16). One Lord and but one there must be.

The question then is: Who shall it be? There are "lords many" as there are gods many, and that too in the Christian sphere as well as in the pagan. The demons of the one are well mated by the self-appointed vicars of Christ in the other, men who, in utter disregard of divine direction to the contrary, take advantage of the readiness of Christian people to be led to lord it over God's heritage. Some of them proceed so far as to oppose and exalt themselves "against all that is called God, or that is worshiped; so that they sit in the temple of God, showing themselves to be God." (2 *Thess.* II: 4). Others allow themselves to be called Christs, as though the head of the church and the Lord of glory were but an ideal character who could have any number of repetitions. And yet a larger number have practically favored the lordship of the king or queen, parliament or civil magistrate, canon law or council, as though of necessity there must be some recognized human authority between Christ and his people. But what is the answer of the Word to our question? It is this: "there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him." (1 *Cor.* VIII: 6). He is Lord whom no man can intelligently and heartily call such, save "by the Holy Spirit." (1 *Cor.* XII: 3). "Christ is the head of the church" as the husband is the head of the wife. (*Eph.* V: 23).

Not unmeauing then is the emphasis which the Word places upon this doctrine of the "one Lord," on the one hand standing opposed, as it does, to that imperious domination which presumptuous men are ever ready to proffer, and on the other, holding the individual Christian and the church in that rigid subordination to Christ, the Head, which is absolutely indispensable to his being their life and growth.

(*e.*) "*One Faith.*"

Of faith as an *order* covering doctrinal beliefs, the *genera* and *species* are well nigh as numerous as the inspiring spirits or the ruling lords by which men are controlled, and quite as numerous, we suppose, as the bodies into which the human family has been rent. Of the genus *Christian faith,* the species are as numerous as the creeds or sects into which Christ's original body, the New Testament church, has been divided. But it is none of these species with which our church constitution is concerned. It is concerned with that to which any and all truly Christian doctrinal beliefs stand related as does the stream to the fountain, or as does conduct to the life-principle,—that faith through whose hearing of the one Lord we receive the one spirit (*Gal.* III: 2); that faith in Christ Jesus by which we are made "sons of God" (26); through which life flows to the believer, when the law is impotent to issue it (21, 22); that faith which is practically "the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus," which sets one free from "the law of sin and death" (*Rom.* VIII: 2); or, to use the apostle's thought in our context, that

faith through which we are "saved by grace" (II: 8), and "have boldness and access with confidence" unto God the Father (III: 12). This faith is the vital bond which connects the believer to Christ, and is therefore the channel of all divine communication. It is hence as clearly fundamental in a scheme of church doctrine as is either the one body, the one spirit which animates, the one hope for a polar star, or the one Lord who rules.

(*f.*) "*One Baptism.*"

The actual church is a visible or tangible body composed of, and having reference to beings of sense perception, and very naturally, therefore, has among its doctrines some which refer to externals. Beings of sense perception; and that perverted, however, are so liable to substitute form for spirit that it was doubtless appropriate that those externals should be as few and significant as possible. Hence their number in the doctrinal part of the church constitution is reduced to a unit. That unit, however, like those with which it is associated, is one of immense force.

The one baptism, of course, cannot be the baptism of the Spirit, for that would make this doctrine a substantial repetition of number two, which could not for a moment be tolerated in so brief a scheme. It must, then be water baptism, by which, as already shown, we are inducted "by the one Spirit into the one body" (1 *Cor.* XII : 13), and by which, in like manner, we visibly or ostensibly enter the kingdom of heaven (*John* III: 5), the rite of admission being the same for

both. And this, standing associated with such august units as the other six of this doctrinal scheme, is most emphatically *one* baptism, tolerating neither repetition nor variation of mode. That it is exclusively "one" in both particulars is manifest from the very formulas in which it is described, such as "born of water," "baptized into his death," "united with the likeness of his death," and also "with that of his resurrection," "baptized into one body," etc., (*John* III: 5; *Rom.* VI: 3, 5; 1 *Cor.* XII: 13.) Neither birth, death, resurrection nor union with Christ's body occur but once; hence, but once should their symbol occur. To repeat it, even for the sake of deepening an impression, might falsify this important fact. Moreover, the formulas, like all other descriptive accounts, and like the word *baptize* itself in the original Greek, tolerate only immersion as the mode; that is, a symbolic burial and resurrection, intended to picture the most momentous change, save the fall, ever experienced by a human being in this life—a change from death to life, from communion with Satan and demons to communion "with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ" (1 *John* I: 3). Such a doctrinal unit, then, like each of the other six, is one of immense significance, and should be very sacredly guarded. Such emphasis does the apostle lay upon it that he not only includes it in "the unity of the spirit," but would have every disciple an embodiment of it in his approach to the mercy seat, by having had his "body washed in pure water," as well as his "heart sprinkled from an evil conscience" by the blood of Jesus (*Heb.* X: 19–22). Its very position is proof

abundant that the practical effects of marring it must be too serious for full computation. They respect things which are most vital in Christian experience.

(*g.*) "*One God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in all.*"

Fleeing from God, as in the garden of Eden, or not l king "to retain him in their knowledge," and hence changing "his glory" into something vastly inferior, (*Rom.* 1: 23, 28), the men of this world have generally become polytheists, pantheists or atheists, having no rational hope and being "without God." As a consequence, they, of course, fail to recognize his true fatherhood and providence, and, being also destitute of his indwelling spiritual and eternal life, are as wretched as they have made themselves sinful. Such is sin's awful sweep of ruin, to abate which is the mission of Christ and his church in the world. Abated, and the sovereignty, fatherhood, protection, inspection and indwelling life of God gratefully experienced, the world's long prodigal career ends, and a most joyous greeting occurs before the mansions of glory.

Now, so far as concerns the members of Christ's church, who have been truly born of the Spirit as well as of water, and who, inspired by the one "blissful hope," have joyously enrolled themselves under the banner of the one Lord, this atheistic tendency has been abated, and Jehovah is really the God and Father of all, over all, through all and in all. His sovereignty, fatherhood, protection, inspection and life are their treasures in heaven, to purchase which they have been

willing to sell the whole field of this polytheistic, pantheistic or atheistic world. In their experience God has been practically in Christ reconciling the world unto himself. The long wilderness wandering is over, and the grand climax of doctrine and life is reached; they are in Christ and Christ is in God.

Many specialties of experience may be added to what has been said, but they need no other doctrinal generalization to cover them. This doctrine which is last in the scheme is also last and highest in experience. All others are for this. In this, Eden is regained and primal purity won.

SECTION VI.–HUMAN CREEDS COMPARED.

Such are the "seven pillars" of the house which "wisdom hath builded," (*Prov.* IX: 1.) And it is remarkable how meager in comparison with them are the devisings of men. Compare, if you please, the oldest and most cherished of all the creeds, the one miscalled the Apostles, and adopted by the Greek, Roman and Protestant churches in common. We give it in the form in which it is now received, and which involves a few additions made since the year 600:

1. "I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth;

2. And in Jesus Christ his only son our Lord;

3. Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary;

4. Suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried;

5. He descended into hell;

6. The third day he rose again from the dead;

7. He ascended into heaven and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty;

8. From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

9. I believe in the Holy Ghost;

10. The holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints;

11. The forgiveness of sins;

12. The resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen."

Condensed or summarized by ejecting its expository portions, according to the Apostle's Creed we have been considering, it stands thus:

1. I believe in God the Father Almighty;

2. In Jesus Christ, his only son, our Lord;

3. In the Holy Ghost;

4. In the Holy Catholic Church;

5. In the forgiveness of sins;

6. In the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting.

Dropping now from this summary the 4th and 5th items as being, the first unnecessary in a constitution which a church adopts for itself, and the second virtually included in the general sweep of our seven, and we have four points left for comparison. But how weak the expression of either as compared with "one God and Father," "one Lord," "one Spirit," "one hope." To say I believe in the Holy Ghost does not say but that I believe in all the familiar spirits of which men ever dreamed. To say I believe in God the Father

or in Jesus Christ, our Lord, does not say but that I believe in many Gods as Fathers or in many Christs as Lords. And to say that I believe in the resurrection of the body and life everlasting, is to say far less than that I and the other members of Christ's body possess the "one hope" which not only involves the resurrection and life, but distinguishes them as mine, and subordinates all other hopes to itself or excludes them entirely. Then not a word does this summary utter with reference to the one body, the one faith or the one baptism, each of them vital elements in the unity the Spirit would embody in every Christian church. It is perfectly marvellous that any company of Christian men could ever have stumbled over the real creed of the apostles, and substituted so meager an affair. And yet more marvellous is it that for so many centuries multitudes could be found to represent that either the apostles in council framed such a document, or each of them added an item to a growing structure until the original was complete. Not to say, of course, that this so-called Apostles' Creed does not involve much important scripture truth, it is manifest, upon a moment's comparison with the other, that it falls almost infinitely below it in aim, scope and accuracy. In neither respect does it involve what the unity of the Spirit or the church constitution doctrinally involves. Nor does it involve what is contemplated in the apostles' "unity of the faith," to which Christians, by the ministry of the church, are expected to grow. It involves simply a few salient points of doctrine which have been the bones of contention in the past, and even

those it does not state in their exclusive aspects as it should.

A comparison of other and later creeds would give us no better results as respects the question, What must be believed in order to the Spirit's true church unity? The Nicean creed, which originated in the fourth century, and is next in esteem to the Apostle's so-called, treats of the essence or substantial nature of the Son of God as related to that of the Father, and involves, therefore, at the most, only an attempt to educe the true faith concerning one point in the unity of the Spirit, leaving six points substantially untouched. The Athanasian creed, which originated not earlier than the middle of the fifth century (*Smith's Chron. Tables*, 19, *m.*), treats of the Trinity, leaving at least four points of the true Apostles' Creed untouched. Like the Nicean, it embodies statements of great value, no doubt, as they are the results of immense labor, but it leaves us utterly blind as to the church constitution doctrinally considered. Nor will any of the great symbols of the sixteenth and following centuries shed any more light. They are valuable contributions to doctrinal theology, but utterly worthless in the line of doctrinal ecclesiology. Be they long or short, give they ever so much light upon the elements of a true and gospel faith, they do not even profess to give us those elements as faith's unity, and much less in their relation to the more fundamental unity of the Spirit. Examine every syllable of them all, and the question, What doctrines are essential to churchhood? is not even hinted.

We greatly marvel that both this question and the true Apostles' Creed which answers it should have had so long a go-bye. But never, perhaps, could they have been of greater utility to the Christian world than now, when so much is said and so little comprehended respecting Christian or church unity.

Section VII.—Doctrinal Additions.

The only remaining question which logically arises to devout faith is: *Ought churches to content themselves with this scheme of constitutional doctrine, or ought they, as expressive of their attainment toward the unity of the faith, to add in a supplementary way such other schemes as they may judge to be involved in this and supported by other Scripture?* In other words: Ought they to add their doctrinal theologies to this doctrinal ecclesiology?

We do not propose to discuss the question in its length and breadth, but simply to offer a few suggestions.

To the study of doctrinal theology in its most extensive ramifications, we think no reasonable objection can be made, provided, of course, the true spirit and methods prevail. On the other hand, we believe the study to be emphatically essential to the "building up of the body of Christ" and its thorough sanctification by the truth. Every revealed truth we believe to be important, and hence worthy of being sought for its practical value. But if the results of such study are to be embodied in church creeds, as they have usually been, we think those creeds should be supplementary

to the Church Constitution Creed, which is essential, as they are not in all their designations, to "the unity of the Spirit," and of which they should appear as the logical and scriptural outgrowths. Thus a clear line of distinction would be drawn between what is indispensable to church membership doctrinally and experimentally, and what it is hoped the maturer disciple will attain to. And this surely would be a great point gained.

But the question still remains: Is it best to add them in even this form?

If they were not added, of course it would not follow that doctrines should be inculcated in no other way. The sphere of effort in this direction would scarcely be touched, for the creeds have done very little towards holding their adherents, to say nothing of aggressive operations. Those divisions of Christendom which have elaborated their creeds to the greatest extent have probably suffered quite as much as others in the line of schisms.

Again, if they were not added, some controversies might probably be avoided. Suppose, for example, our "seven pillars" had been recognized in all the past of the Christian era as the church in fundamental doctrine, is it probable that either the early controversy concerning the Trinity, the more recent between Calvanism and Arminianism, or the present on communion which involves the very existence of the church institution, could have been carried to the extent they have? One Lord, that is, one sovereign Lord, and but one, and he Jesus the Christ, must have

greatly modified the first if duly apprehended, while the exclusive aspects of the one faith or the one baptism in its symbolic relation to the one spiritual birth must have quieted the second, and the one baptism entirely precluded the third. If Jesus is really Lord, what room is there for discussion as to his equality with the Father? If there is but one faith as a vital bond of union with Christ, or one spiritual birth as symbolized in the one baptism, what ground is there for discussing the question of repeated falls from grace? And if the constitution demands one baptism and tolerates but one, while the supper is an ordinance to be observed "in the church" into which baptism inducts (1 *Cor.*, XI., 18 *sq.*), how can there possibly arise the question of the precedence of baptism to the supper? Multitudes of minds are wanting in logic, but multitudes now supposed to be wanting would reveal much more than they now exhibit if they could be kept facing these fundamental doctrines of the New Testament church long enough to receive an impression.

Again, if these supplementary schemes of doctrine were not added, the omission would suggest if not compel a much wider range of charity as respects differences of opinion than now prevails. Rome would cease ending her common doctrinal promulgations by saying: "If any man believe not thus and so, let him be accursed;" and the members of our Protestant churches would not so often proclaim or ungraciously act non-fellowship for their brethren who differ from them on some question of meat-eating, singing or business policy. It would then be seen at a glance

that, while the unity of the faith which comprises many things may be very desirable, the unity of the Spirit which comprises only seven things is alone indispensable to church relationship.

But, on the other hand, it may be suggested that the chief of these advantages could be secured if a scheme of doctrine something like our church creeds were added, *provided* the proper distinction were made apparent. This is undoubtedly true, and possibly too, under those circumstances, the needful charity prevailing, something might be gained in the way of unity of the faith. We should be immeasurably more hopeful than on the old plan of ignoring the unity of the Spirit altogether, or, what is tantamount, reducing it to a single item — the possession of the Spirit—and, in consequence, of somewhat blindly groping after the elements of the faith without inspiration's key to its unity.

The past and present want, not merely of the unity of the Spirit, but even of the one Spirit which constitutes an all-controlling item in the unity, is appalling. War rather than peace has characterized the Christian world ever since a false Apostles' Creed supplanted the true. It would hardly do to modify this statement with reference to the very marked Christian union movement of the present time. It is a prodigious effort to conquer a peace, to arrive at union by dint of strategy and compromise. Men who plead most loudly for union are among the most uncharitable toward those who differ from them, crying, "Yield, yield," with no thought of yielding a particle themselves, and assuming to know others a great deal better

than others could possibly imagine they know themselves. Nor is the case likely to be very different, men being as zealous and conscientious as they are upon religious subjects, until the proper distinction is drawn between what must be believed in church relation and what may be. There must be some recognized standard of churchhood doctrinally considered, before these Christian unionists, like so many ungovernable and conflicting winds of night, will generate purity and peace instead of hurricanes, or, in other words, before the unity of the Spirit will be sought in harmony with the mind of the Spirit.

Whether, then, a doctrinal supplement be added to the true Apostles' Creed or not, history and the times as well as the word of God demand that we change our method and make, not man's creed, but God's, the unit of measurement, if we would have Christendom attain to that unity of the Spirit which God will accept, and pass thence to that unity of the faith which he will approve.

CONSTITUTIONAL REQUISITES TO A NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH.

THE CHURCH "FITLY FRAMED."

"The church which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all."

1. MEMBERS—Baptized believers.

2. OFFICERS { ELDERS, DEACONS, or { TEACHER { Evangelist-Teacher. Pastor-in-Chief. ELDERS—Pastor-Teachers. DEACONS—Care of temporalities.

3. GOVERNMENT—Democratic { SENATE. ASSEMBLY.

4. DOCTRINES.

Wisdom s "seven pillars."

"The unity of the Spirit."

1. "ONE BODY"—a church.
2. "ONE SPIRIT"—the Holy Spirit.
3. "ONE HOPE"—the resurrection.
4. "ONE LORD"—Jesus Christ.
5. "ONE FAITH"—of the heart.
6. "ONE BAPTISM"–immersion once.
7. "ONE GOD AND FATHER OF ALL, who is over all, and through all, and in all."—JEHOVAH.

PART THIRD.

APPLICATION OF PRINCIPLES.

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PART THIRD.

CHAPTER I.

IDEAS OF THE CHURCH APPLIED.

THE mind naturally gravitates from principles toward their practical application. Unfortunately, however, it is sometimes as illogical here as elsewhere, and hence makes wrong applications. It is of the utmost importance to the cause of Christ that the principles he has revealed be clearly apprehended, and their application as clearly drawn. Error in the last part of the work is as hurtful as error in the first. In the good day coming when "the unity of the faith" shall have succeeded to "the unity of the Spirit," error will have been eliminated from both spheres of study. But meanwhile it may be useful to reflect, that sound principles firmly held are the best method of securing the application of them to practical life. With these few preliminary observations, we will now venture to apply our fundamental ideas of the church in a few of the more important directions.

Section I.—Unchurching Churches.

We shall be met at the very outset with the objection, that our idea of the local church unchurches very many churches which are doing a good work for our

divine Master and the world. They do not conform to our pattern of the church, and hence cannot properly be called churches.

We of course admit that our idea will draw a line very distinctly between what, in the New Testament sense, is a church and what is not. This is just what we prize it for. Ideas which are not definite are hardly to be called ideas, certainly are no very great powers for good. One of the peculiar features of Christianity is, that it is so exact in its principles and claims, thus tending to make men exact or perfect in character. The great Head of the church allows no one to be a disciple who does not forsake absolutely all to follow him. The great principles of moral law he enforces, not only to the letter, but to the most fundamental in spirit also. Not a jot or a tittle of the law can go unfulfilled. Even under the old economy, the very tabernacle was to be made in all things exactly according to the pattern given, and its sacrificial offerings might not, in the least particular, vary in kind or quality from the divine requirement. A good illustration of the spirit which Christianity generates as well as requires, may be found in Perpetua, a young Christian woman of Carthage, who was a victim of Pagan persecution. Twenty-two years of age, a mother of a young child, her own mother a Christian but her aged and adoring father a pagan, she was arrested, and, if she did not recant, was soon to experience the horrors of the dungeon and death by wild beasts. When brought before the police, her grey-haired father also appeared and strenuously urged her to pity

his grey hairs, save him from disgrace and her infant son from death. But calmly and kindly, yet resolutely, she pointed to a vessel lying on the ground and said: "Can I call this vessel anything else than what it is? No. Neither can I say to you anything else than that I am a Christian."

There is, of course, in such adherence to the right an implied condemnation of the wrong. But the case of the church is no unusual one in that respect. "By faith Noah, being warned by God concerning things not yet seen, moved with fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his house; by which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith." (*Heb.* XI: 7). But surely no one could wish Noah to have sacrificed faith's inheritance and the salvation of his house, in order to spare the world the condemnation implied in his building an ark according to divine directions. Nor could any one possessed of a spark of Christian love wish, in either the one case or the other, to have the divine do obeisance to the carnal human. On the contrary, he must rejoice if inspiration has been precise, and, in both instances alike, given us definite things under definite names. It is to be observed, however, in the case of the church, that, if the true does condemn the false, it does not follow that what is false in some respects when judged by the ideally perfect, is false and useless in all respects. There is an ideally perfect standard of Christian character to which all Christians are exhorted to aspire, but to which none have as yet attained. There are many institutions which have been

eminently useful, but which do not even aspire to be called churches. Such are missionary, Bible, tract and other societies. The kingdom of heaven itself, as we have seen, is no church. While therefore it is claimed that many so-called churches are not such strictly speaking, it would be very ungenerous and illogical, for that reason simply, to condemn them as false and worthless *in toto*. They may have done much toward the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom. They may be stepping-stones toward the perfect in church organization. While, then, we should imitate Perpetua and call things by their right names as far as current terms will allow, we should be grateful to God for any and all of the church elements we may find in organizations which bear that name, and honor those organizations for all the good they have wrought in the world.

Section II.—Exchange of Pulpits.

The question of the exchange of pulpits is one which already perplexes many minds not as rigid in their ideas of the church as ourselves, and very likely may suggest itself anew in connection with our theory. Stimulated by former fears, some will very likely conclude that extra danger will attend this extra emphasis of the local church idea. But the whole subject is very easily disposed of if ruling principles are properly apprehended. The whole trouble concerning the exchange of pulpits by men mentally and spiritually competent to occupy a pulpit, grows, not out of the idea of the church, but out of the ideas of ordination

and succession. It is a wave of agitation originating in Romanism and heaving along the line of Romish ideas. According to the Romish theory none are competent to perform priests' duties who are not in the succession by having received the *character indelibilis* which is imparted in ordination. Hence, of course, one who is not competent to occupy a pulpit is not competent to exchange. Romish ideas of ordination and succession are as faulty as Romish ideas of the church, and hence should not rule in a *bona fide* New Testament church. The true theory of ordination doubtless is, church election solemnized by prayer and imposition of hands. But this theory, which makes the church the judge as to its permanent ministry, certainly tolerates the idea of its judging as to a casual ministration. And if, in the plenitude of its power, it call through its pastor for the occasional use of gifts which are serviceable to the kingdom of heaven, though in its judgment they may be connected with some aberrations as to church order, we see not how it forfeits either its character as a church or the character of its permanent ministry. In the case of its permanent ministry, it elects one whom it believes to be called of God and qualified for that work; in the case of the casual ministration, it tacitly elects one whom it believes to be qualified for that particular ministration, saying nothing about qualification for any further service. In both alike it renders honor in so far and to whom it believes honor to be due, praying with equal consistency in both cases, "Thy kingdom come."

But these points are comparatively insignificant, and we proceed to others of grave consequence.

Section III.—The Existence of the Church.

Romanists unequivocally and persistently claim that theirs is the church and the only church. The invisible church of Protestants they call, and rightly so, "an abstraction, an ideal thing, claiming and able to exercise no authority over the individual judgment and belief." (*Brownson's Review*, 1848, *p.* 4.) And as to the existence of the church among the various organizations called churches, they triumphantly and scornfully ask: "Which of your thousand and one jarring sects is it?" (*Do. p.* 7.) Thus Protestantism, as viewed by them, is a disintegrating process by which not only church authority and personal salvation, but the church organism itself is reduced to a cypher.

Shall we admit or repel the charge? If we admit it, we must either go to Rome or concede that no definite church polity or constitution is required by the New Testament. But the latter will be somewhat difficult to do in view of Christ's proposition to *build* something which he called a church, and of all the New Testament has to say about its officers, authority, government, discipline and relation to truth's supremacy. If we repel the charge, what shall be our proof of its groundlessness while we hold to the invisible church idea?

Manifestly we may, in that event, as well admit as repel, for the logic of that idea will surely rule all *jure divino* church organism into nonentity. If fur-

ther proof of this than that which is furnished by the spirit of the times is needed, a quotation or two of current reasoning will suffice. As little as such a thing might be expected from such a source, Dean Alford repudiating what he calls "a hard and dry theory of salvation in a certain form of church alone," meaning Episcopacy, and denying that any one form of church government is made obligatory by either our Lord or his apostles, says:

"It follows necessarily from these premises, that the One Church Catholic shall be made up of many bodies of Christians, with diverse organizations, various forms of worship, differing habits of thought. Each of these bodies of Christians requires for its very existence rules, requires public order, requires subjection to constituted authority; but these rules, this order, this authority, are only divine as all other rule and order and authority is divine, and not by any indefeasible injunction from the Head of the church. A man is not a whit more nor a whit less a member of the Church Catholic because his section of it happens to be governed as the great majority of Christian churches in all ages have been governed. That general consent may go far to recommend such a system of church polity; but it can never make that requisite to the church universal which the Lord has not ordained."

Of course the Lord has ordained no given polity for the church universal, for not being an organized body, it can have no polity. The Dean's argument both concedes the charge of the Romanist, and rules out any *jure divino* church organism.

But some go further than he. The following is from "Sound Words" (*Nov.* 1872, *p.* 203), understood to be an organ of the Plymouth Brethren under the leadership of Mr. Darby:

"We have spoken of that church so dear to Christ, for which he gave himself. If I turn to the picture of it which I have in its first bright days, it is impossible not to ask of that church, which is the body of Christ, united together and to him by that Spirit by which we are all baptized into that one body, (1 *Cor.* XII: 13), where is that church now? It still remains, you say, scattered throughout the various bodies of Christendom. Well, that is true, no doubt. But then, what scattered it? And more, what *keeps* it scattered? Was it an evil for it to be scattered? And is it not as great an evil for it to continue scattered?

"You may say: 'We neither scattered nor can bring it together again.' That is true, too. Neither you nor I can undo what has been done. But we can surely own the evil and *ourselves* cease from it. And that we are called and bound to do.

"And then what about these various bodies of Christendom, among which (you say) the *true* church is scattered? Plainly, they are not the true church themselves, for that very reason that the *true* church is scattered among them. If, then, they are not the true church, what are they? Do they even *represent* the true church as far as an outward, visible body may?

"They do *not*, for they are not one body, even professedly, but *many;* and by the very fact of what they

are, to be a member of any one of them is to be *not* a member of the rest. Thus these bodies do not even represent the church of God. They are societies of people who are associated together upon the ground, not of membership in the body of Christ, but of holding certain views which *distinguish them from other Christians.* And that,—suffer me to say it, brethren; the appeal is to Scripture in the matter,—*that* is true sectarianism, 'schism' in the Bible sense, "schism in the body' (of Christ).

"Mark it, then, brethren; it is no schism to be outside *these* bodies. It is a duty; for by the very fact of being united to *them*, I separate myself so far from all those who, though true and devoted Christians, cannot give in their adhesion to the creed or to the regulations of the sect."

Reduced to the syllogistic form this reasoning stands thus:

The true church is the (unorganized) body of Christ.

But none of the so-called churches are the (unorganized) body of Christ;

Therefore none of the so-called churches are the true church; and hence the easy inference,—it is duty to separate from them.

Thus the Plymouth Brethren virtually concede the charge of Romanists, nay, approve the thing charged, while their own divisions at the same time attest the need of something more tangible in the way of a church than the invisible body they commend. Very soon after their appearance in Great Britain

they became divided into three parties, two of them very contentious, and in this country they have had a similar experience. (*New Am. Cyc.*).

Again, then, we say, Protestants may as well admit as repel the charge of Romanists, that they have no church vested with any authority, so long as they attempt to defend the idea of an invisible church. That idea, like Pharoah's lean kine, will devour anything and everything in the form of an authoritatively organized church empowered in any respect to bind and loose. The human mind is so constituted that it cannot say, on the one hand, that the true church of Christ is this unorganized, invisible, or universal body, and, on the other, treat as divinely authoritative an organization with ordinances and disciplinary proceedings. If the greater and more important is all-sufficient, nay the ideally perfect, what need of the appliances of the second? So the latent logic of the mind will always reason, and hence the wonderful change on the subject of the church within the past few years. Every one who, in any system of terminology, gives currency to the invisible church idea, has only to wait the revolution of the wheels of time, and, if his idea prevail, he will see the logic of events grinding all he holds dear in the form of a local church to powder. Mark the fearful fact, reader, for it is the work of this very hour. Surely they who first introduced this Trojan horse into the city of the redeemed, introduced more than they intended, for no thoughtful, sensible mind could for a moment consent to abandon utterly and forever the idea of a church "fitly

framed together," and invested with some kind of governmental authority. The very divisions of Protestant Christendom prove the statement true.

If, then, we would neither go to Rome ourselves nor admit the charge of Romanists;—more than this, if we would not destroy everything in the form of a church organization which, with divine sanctions, can prove a pillar and ground of the truth, making known to principalities and powers the manifold wisdom of God on the one hand, and perfecting the Christian character on the other, we must emphasize the local idea of the church as that which, with invariable consistency and uniformity, the Scriptures present. It will then become easy to tell which of "the thousand and one jarring sects" is the church. It will also be just as easy to settle the question of church authority. The church is no jarring sect at all; nor is it any peaceable confederation of Christian societies into a denominational, state or one Catholic church. It is that body, multiplied though it be like the stars of heaven, which copies, in doctrine and organization, Christ's ideal of the local church; and its authority is that which Christ has given it for self-protection in doctrine and organization as well as for the upbuilding of itself in love. Let every religious society in the world embody as its fundamental creed the seven points of doctrine inspiration makes essential to the unity of the Spirit (*Part II., ch.* 6), and come as near as possible to what its own careful judgment will pronounce to be the New Testament method of officering the church and transacting its business, and

all harpers upon the schisms and distractions of Protestant Christendom will retire to the shade as speedily as hooting owls yield to the rising sun, while a tidal wave of peace, joy and spiritual prosperity will sweep the continents as though the ocean of divine love had overflowed its bounds and knew no limits. The Romish universal church destroys the spiritual life of what it denominates the body of Christ; the Protestant invisible or universal destroys its form, and hence its power; the New Testament local preserves both its life and form. The Romish universal and all its progeny outrage the common sense of believers, in limiting the kingdom of heaven on earth to its own members, the Protestant invisible, in all its branches outrages the same common sense by obliterating all distinction between the kingdom and the church; the New Testament local outrages no one's common sense in either direction, but recognizes members of the kingdom wherever they may be, while by its emphasis of church doctrines, discipline and duties, it urges upon them that culture by which they are to be tried and edified. In the universal church the pendulum goes to the formal extreme; in the invisible it goes to the undefined and hence, it may be, bogus spiritual; in the local it settles into the Lord's intended union between the formal and spiritual. The prevalence of the local idea is the only salvation of the church itself as the organized medium through which God can make known to principalities and powers in heavenly places even, the manifold wisdom which has

been hid in Christ from the interminable ages of the past. What an importance, then, must be attached to it!

Speaking of church authority brings us very naturally to the application of our theory to

Section IV.—Church Discipline.

By discipline we mean, not merely corrective discipline, but even more emphatically, instructing or teaching, discipline etymological. The one is the complement of the other. In both directions Christ has endowed his church with disciplinary power. "He gave some as apostles, some as prophets, some as evangelists, some as pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the building up of the body of Christ; till we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, by cunning craftiness after the wily manner of error; but holding the truth, may in love grow up into him in all things who is the head, Christ; from whom all the body, fitly framed together and compacted by means of every joint of the supply, according to the working in the measure of each single part, effects the increase of the body to the upbuilding of itself in love." (*Eph.* IV: 11–16). This passage is sufficient as to the direction of teaching, and all that pertains to the correction or expulsion of offenders, looks in the direction of corrective discipline. It is needless to quote, the matter

is so well understood. Suffice it to remind the reader that when, of an offender, Christ says, "If he hear not the church, let him be to thee as a heathen man and a publican," adding, that whatsoever the church binds on earth is bound in heaven, he actually invests a tangible body of men with disciplinary authority.

It is easy to see how a church, in the use of its legitimate ministries and authority, may promote the growth of its members in grace and knowledge. So important, indeed, are these means of grace, that very few disciples of Christ, probably, would achieve either conquest or growth to any considerable degree without them. The teaching offices of the church conduce directly to growth in knowledge, its benevolent operations, in pursuance of its great commission, to growth in love and labor, while its business and disciplinary transactions serve to test and solidify the character Trials induce patience, and the soul-friction attendant upon an honest endeavor to "keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace," adds a mellow lustre, if sanctified, to the whole character. In an endless variety of ways, church life and church work develop Christian manhood and so promote the kingdom of Christ in its internal forces.

But how do the views of the church we have noticed stand related to this disciplinary work? For the Catholic or universal church, whose tendency is so strongly to externals, let the vernacular of the people, supplanted in worship by an unknown tongue, a preached gospel supplanted by an insipid and idolatrous ritualism, frequent anathemas consigning their vic-

tims to endless torment, and endless modes of penance adapted as disciplinary processes rather to brutes than to Christian men, answer. Aye, let the miseries of hermit life, the impoverished mental and even financial condition of the subjects of priestly domination, and the untold horrors of the inquisition, speak. They shall tell of a discipline unsurpassed in severity, while its results are precisely the opposite of those sought. For the invisible church, the fact that it is an ideal body, having neither a ministry, disciplinary action of any kind, nor even an organized existence, is a sufficient comment. It is at antipodes to the universal. It has, nevertheless, an influence upon all "particular" church organizations which aim to embody it as nearly as they can, and a most deadening influence it is as respects at least corrective discipline. Under the rule of the Catholic idea, the church with a mighty hand excommunicates the offender, and he feels that hell opens to receive him; under the rule of the invisible idea, the offender excommunicates the particular church and retires with a proud consciousness of victory to the superior and invisible church. Under Catholic rule, if a man preach another gospel than that which is sanctioned by the church, the voice of authority quickly says, "let him be anathema maranatha;" under the rule of the invisible idea, if a man preach another gospel than that which is sanctioned by the particular society with which he is associated, he pronounces his society a schismatic body, and proclaims his duty to withdraw for the sake of the true body of Christ. There is scarcely a particular church

in Protestant Christendom whose discipline is not, to a greater or less extent, nullified by the blighting sway of this invisible church idea. Under the forms especially of open communion and Christian union, it threatens to sweep church as well as church discipline into nonentity.

We seem, therefore, to be shut up to the local idea of the church for discipline, unless we can content ourselves with the kind administered by Rome. And now let us, for a moment, suppose that there were no churches in the world but local ones, with such constitutions as we have described. How would discipline fare in that event? They would respect each other's decisions, of course, all being in necessary fellowship with each. Hence one could not become, to any considerable extent, a refuge for the excommunicated of others. Decisions made would also have something like their intended weight, for the emphasis laid upon the local church would be emphasis laid upon local church decisions. Moreover, there would be no resort to an ideal or invisible church tribunal *ad libitum*, as a method of nullifying local church decisions, the so-called invisible church, in the event supposed, ceasing its higher-court existence. Still further. The history of the local church idea, if we do not greatly mistake, proves that it is most conducive to unity in doctrine or sentiment. The so-called strong governments have been the ones most frequently ruptured by schismatics. Unity in doctrine then would give additional weight to disciplinary work. We can see nothing in the line of either corrective or instruc-

tive discipline which the local church idea cannot minister. It is most favorable to general intelligence and spirituality, and, if uncontrolled by a dominating and conflicting idea, would be the most favorable to corrective discipline. At all events, both of the other ideas have failed, and, according to present appearances, success must come from this or from nowhere.

We will next apply our principles to

Section V.—The Truths Expressed in Ordinances.

Baptism and the Lord's Supper have acquired the technical designation of church ordinances, and of the desirableness of perpetuating them for the sake of the truth they embody, no one can doubt who attentively listens while his divine Lord says: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved," and, "Do this in remembrance of me." But that we may the more intelligently apprehend the matter, let us inquire afresh: What truth or truths do these ordinances express, and who are charged with their care?

The first part of the question, as respects baptism, is answered very explicitly in Rom. VI: "Know ye not, that all we who were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? We were buried, therefore, with him by the baptism into his death; that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we also should walk in newness of life." Baptism, then, is a symbolic burial and resurrection, expressive of a passage spiritually from death to life. As respects the Supper, 1 Cor. XI: 26 is equally or sufficiently explicit: "For as often as ye eat this bread,

and drink this cup, ye show the Lord's death till he come;" show it, that is, not simply as a fact, but as the believing and baptized communicant stands related to it. How this is, he has previously indicated in the ordinance of baptism,—he himself dies and lives with Christ. The Supper, then, repeats substantially the idea of baptism, the difference being, that baptism symbolizes the beginning, while the Supper symbolizes the progress of this practical fellowship with Christ in his dying and living. Christ's death and resurrection are the archetype, and they the types in which the beginning, middle and end of the Christian's career are cast. Hence they set forth to him and to all who would be Christians the great vital truth of the gospel,—that without which there is no Christian life.

The second part of our question is answered with equal clearness in the Word. According to Eph. IV: 5, baptism is one of the seven points involved in the unity of the Spirit which a Christian church, like the Ephesian, represents; while according to 1 Cor. XII: 13, it is the door of entrance into the church-body of Christ, (*cf.* verse 27); whence it is clear that the church is charged with its care. According to 1 Cor. XI: 18, 20, 33, the Supper is observed "in the church;" while, according to 1 Cor. V, the church is to put away the grossly wicked from its ranks, that it may "keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth;" whence it is again evident that the church is charged with the care of the Supper. The church, then, is the guardian of both ordinances.

But now the question arises: Under which idea of the church will the needed care be given?

As to the Catholic or universal church, it is sufficient to say, that the care it actually has given of the ordinances, so far from perpetuating the truth they were to symbolize, has made baptism another thing than a burial, and a procuring cause rather than a symbol of the new birth, while the Supper it has metamorphosed from a remembrance of Christ's sacrificial death into an idolatrous repetition of it. It has even assumed to possess the authority to change ordinances, claiming in this an authority greater than that of the inspired word itself. Using this impiously assumed authority, it has still more obscured the vital truth expressed in baptism, by causing it to be draped in the dust and battle clouds of contending hosts of believers.

As to the invisible church, little more need be said than to name it again. How can it guard, protect or use ordinances which, by its own name and nature, it repudiates? True, the so-called "particular" churches which represent this idea in part, only so far as is compatible with something in the line of organization, do in a manner maintain the ordinances or their semblance, but half an eye can see that their hands are tremulous from the conflict of ideas respecting the church which is waged within them, and, if they continue their present methods of argumentation and open communion, are destined to drop them altogether or make them expressive of anything but what their Lord intended. Long since, baptism in its perverted forms ceased to symbolize, especiallv in the case of uncon-

scious infants, the change to which we have alluded, and the Supper is rapidly following its wandering footsteps. It is now used as a means of grace and as the symbol of Christian fellowship nearly as much as it is for the one purpose to which it was consecrated. In the nature of the case, an invisible church or a visible church which is as nearly as possible a reproduction of the invisible, cannot protect what it discards.

But how is it with the local church idea? Making the Supper an ordinance to be observed "in the church," as we have seen, and making "one baptism" a constitutional doctrine whose reception and practice are essential to churchhood, the story is told in a breath. Each ordinance, and also the order between them, which is nature's as well as the Word's, are guarded by constitutional law so that they are as secure as the church itself. And thus, in the matter of all that is vital in ordinances as well as in Christianity, the church becomes the pillar and ground of the truth.

Section VI.—Christian Union.

No subject has received greater attention, within the few years last passed, than Christian union. Nor could any one who sympathizes with our Lord in his memorable prayer recorded in the seventeenth of John, do otherwise than approve of such attention. Unifying any considerable portion of the human family, which has so long been dismembered, is one of the grandest objects conceivable. The only ground for

criticism respects, not the general aim, but the specific together with the methods of obtaining it.

On these points there is evidently room for great caution, since practically there are as many different theories of union as there are theories of the church, and every man is working that theory which his church represents. Indeed, he may be trying to work more theories than one, as they evidently are who work their church theory and at the same time advocate what is called the "moral unity" theory. Thus we have the spectacle of a many-sided contest about union, reminding us of the two deacons who had become alienated, but one of whom, feeling that they ought not to live so, says to the other: "Brother, it will not do to live so. We must be reconciled, and, since I cannot be, you must." A more undesirable contest could not well exist. Bnt it must continue until Christian people are somewhat agreed as to what Christian union is, and shape their church theories accordingly. It will be our present business to inquire at the Word for the substance of Christian union, or rather Christian unity, nay unity, for the Word says nothing about Christian union, and then compare the three great theories of the church in their adaptations to promote it.

It would be very singular if the Word were to lay so much stress as it evidently does upon unity or oneness among disciples, and yet were to give us no definite idea of what that unity involved. We can charge it with no such inconsistency. Evidently its unity is some kind of concord between a plurality of persons. And evidently again this concord may involve fewer

or more particulars, a greater or less degree of perfection, and still be substantially a Christian concord. This we say on the supposition of Christian growth, young disciples being supposed to embody mutually fewer of the elements of divine knowledge through which they obtain their conformity to Christ than the more advanced. Are we then to suppose the Saviour referred to the lowest or to a more complete type of unity when he prayed, not only for the twelve, but for all who should believe on him through their word, that "all may be one" as the Trinity are one? Evidently not to the lowest; for he adds, "that they may be *perfected* into one." Besides, "he who is joined to the Lord is one Spirit" already. Neither prayer nor any other form of effort is requisite, therefore, to secure what already exists.

If, then, Christian union, in the sense of the Lord's prayer, means unity in a more complete or perfected sense than exists when disciples are first joined to the Lord in one Spirit, what is that more perfect sense? The Word is very clear, as we think. It specifies two kinds or degrees of unity, either of them an advance upon that just noticed, and both of them named and compared in the fourth of Ephesians. One of them is called "the unity of the Spirit," and the other "the unity of the faith." The first is represented by the Ephesian or any other *bona fide* Christian church in the present tense, and the other is an attainment to be sought through the use of such ministries as the Lord has provided for his churches. Hence the Ephesian church are exhorted to "keep" or maintain the first,

while to the second they are to grow as a result of "building up the body of Christ." Now, what the first is, there is no room for doubt. It is something more than a "moral unity" or oneness of spirit. It is a unity which embraces seven distinct doctrinal and practical points as well as a number of persons. The points are as follows: "There is ONE BODY, and ONE SPIRIT, as ye also were called in ONE HOPE of your calling; ONE LORD, ONE FAITH, ONE BAPTISM, ONE GOD AND FATHER of all, who is over all and through all and in you all." The persons are the members of the church. The unit, then, is the church members who practically embody in themselves and in their church organism, these seven vital doctrines. What the second or "the unity of the faith" is, we cannot well mistake. It is something which respects perfection in the Christian man, which prevents his being carried about like a child with every wind of doctrine, and enables him, holding the truth, to grow up, in love, into Christ, in all things, who is the head. It is evidently doctrinal theology as issuing from or harmonizing with the seven fundamentals of "the unity of the Spirit." Into one or both of these unities, then, we understand our Lord to desire his people to be perfected, when he prays that they may be one. If any assume that we are mistaken, it remains for him to point us to that specific unity in the Word which is meant.

Such, then, being the unity meant when we pray with the Saviour for oneness among his people, how stand related to it the church theories we have been considering?

Upon the Catholic or universal theory we need say but little, so decided is the opinion among Protestants against it. Not to dwell upon the difference between its universal corporate unity and a unity whose embodiment is found in a single church like the Ephesian, it is sufficient to say, that in several points it fails fairly even to represent the unity of the Spirit. On its sacramental system, administering, as it attempts to do, the Spirit by the works of law rather than by the hearing of faith, it is fair to question whether in this it truly represents the *One Spirit.* Exalting its Pope to the dizzy height of infallibility, and making each priest a Lord within his province, it cannot truly be said to have but *one Lord*, and that Jesus Christ. Again, assuming, as Romanists do, that the church has the power to change ordinances, and conceding that it has changed the mode of baptism, it can hardly be said to have the *one baptism.* In these and other particulars it is no truthful representation of the unity of the Spirit, and hence could not be of the unity of the faith.

The invisible or Protestant universal church represents it no better. From the very nature of the case, this church can represent only oneness of sympathy. There is nothing else common to all its members. Hence says Mr. Beecher in the *Christian Union:*

"Believing that moral unity is the only union which is either possible or desirable, we shall not waste time in chasing that phantom, a *universal corporate unity* of Christians. We distinguish between oneness of church and oneness of Christian sympathy."

Hence, too, says Dean Alford, who strongly emphasizes the church universal as against his own church Episcopal and any one else's church particular:

"The only unity of the church Catholic (meaning the invisible) consists in its being one body under one head, the members acknowledging and not repudiating each other." (Address quoted above.)

Hence also the common definition of this invisible church as *the body of Christ*, *the communion of saints*, *the household of faith*, *the kingdom of Christ on earth.*

But this Christian sympathy is that lowest form of Christian union which we have shown the Lord could not have prayed for. It is a Christian union which always exists whenever men possess the spirit of Christ, and therefore antedates all our praying and discussion. The invisible or Protestant universal church, therefore, does not and cannot represent the higher and more desirable forms of Christian unity at all. So far from this, all such advocacy of it as Messrs. Beecher and Alford's is a plea against these intended higher forms, inasmuch as they ask us to be contented with that which already exists. It is as though they should assume to plead for higher education, and never take us beyond the common school. The invisible church theory we charge with hindering rather than promoting Christian unity. Nor have we indicated the only way in which it does it. Making us indifferent to anything but an undefined good feeling or fellow sympathy, it endangers the very existence of anything decidedly Christian in the union which it fosters. It uses the terms "Christian sympathy" and

and "Christian union" freely, to be sure, and no doubt sincerely, but where is its pledge or assurance that its union or sympathy shall be thoroughly Christian, when it ignores so many Christian elements revealed as essential to Christ's higher unity? Christian results, we suppose, must come from the operation of Christian causes; and we know of no assurance that the producing causes of a given sympathy or union are Christian, but their conformity to the word of God, —a thing of great doubt where so grave a mistake occurs as the substitution of so-called Christian sympathy, as an end, for the well defined and immensely higher unity of the Spirit or unity of the faith. Two such considerations, then, as the substitution of mere sympathy for the revealed unities of God, and the reasonable doubt whether even that sympathy has any substantial assurance of being, or at least of being continued thoroughly Christian, are enough to utterly condemn the invisible church idea as promotive or protective of the union which it so much emphasizes.

But if we turn now our anxious eyes to the local church idea, and especially if we bear distinctly in mind the doctrinal part of its constitution, we shall find a happy relief from the fruitlessness of the other ideas. A local church like the Ephesian is an actual embodiment of the unity of the Spirit, else it could not be exhorted to "keep" it. As such it is so immeasurably above mere "moral unity" or "Christian sympathy" as its Christian union, that to exhort it to keep such a union would be equivalent to asking it to pluck away the majority of the pillars on which wis-

dom hath builded her house, leaving but one to support the magnificent structure, and that one of somewhat doubtful material. But further than this: embodying the unity of the Spirit, and in harmony with it using Christ's ascension gifts, to wit, his apostles, prophets, evangelists and pastor-teachers, it is on the sure road to the higher unity of the faith, the *ultima thula* of unity. Such a church, or such a specimen of Christian unity, may well appear to the Revelator like a glittering star in the hand of the Son of Man. And all the churches of this Son of Man cast in the same mould and studding the world's dark canopy, like "the seven spirits" of God or the one all Holy Spirit represented by the number which indicates perfection, the result may well appear as "seven churches" or the one perfect and collective church which represents Christian unity attained or perfected in this world of discord and sin, according to the prayer of the Saviour. Not a word might be heard among all the starry host upon the subject of union, not a conference ever occur, but all remain as silent as the spheres, and yet unity would exist as profound and potent as that which guides Arcturus and his sons or binds the sweet influences of the Pleiades. Each church unified and all of any number of churches like it, churches may be multiplied like the sands of the seashore or like the stars of heaven, and Christian unity is ever at hand, only needing to be kept in order to exist. Or let there be any number of the synagogues of Satan scattered among these churches, thus giving to the eye of the superficial or unpracticed

observer the appearance of Babel confusion, and still it remains just as true that Christian unity abounds. These delusive structures no more destroy it than a few blurting meteors or an immense shower of falling stars disturb the order and harmony of the planetary system. Christian unity is not a thing of seeming but a thing of being. It is not an immense corporate unity, nor an equally immense, inorganic, vapory union of atoms, but it is one or a myriad of practical, self-determining, organized bodies embracing the unity of the Spirit and growing by internal transformations or life-like changes into the unity of the faith. As well attempt to incorporate all the trees of the wood into an immense corporate tree, or all the stars of heaven into an immense corporate star, as to incorporate all churches into an immense corporate church; and, on the other hand, as well attempt to disintegrate all the trees or all the stars to life-cells or gold dust, and call the chaotic result unity, as to disintegrate them into the atoms of the inorganic, invisible church and call the result Christian unity. The unit is always the local organic body, and its extended comprehension is always the multiplication of similar bodies. The local church idea is, therefore, the idea on the basis of which alone the Lord's prayer can be answered, and all who believe upon his name be perfected into one.

Section VII.—The World's Evangelization.

All men who are moved by Christian impulses naturally desire the glorious victory contemplated in the Great Commission. But of course all men and mea-

sures are not equally well adapted to secure or effect it. A man of a low order of spirituality and divine knowledge could not equal him who, with other qualifications the same, was of a high order in these fundamentals. And in the same manner must we speak of churches or collections of men. Natural talents sanctified, as were Paul's, and made spiritual gifts, churches constituted according to the pattern given, and doctrines held in their purity, as well as sacraments or ordinances administered rightly, all enter into the account to determine final results, as chemical ingredients and proportions enter into and determine a given material substance. Well-nigh every-thing, indeed, which enters into that structure we call a church, will report itself to aid or retard in its evangelizing movements; that is, to aid or retard the entrance of men into the kingdom of heaven, as possessors of its "righteousness, joy, and peace in the Holy Spirit."

Now, if we survey again the three dominant ideas of the church with reference to their adaptedness to this work, we think we shall find the local idea as strongly commended as elsewhere.

Practically, the universal idea gravitates toward the sacramental system of salvation, a system in which externals determine internals rather than internals externals, form and ceremony preclude or control spirit rather than spirit form and ceremony, sacraments minister saving grace rather than saving grace qualify for sacraments. And as the administration of sacraments is thought to depend for its efficacy upon a spe-

cial grace or character in the administrator, the idea also naturally and historically associates itself with the hierarchical and monarchical forms of church government. In the Church of Rome we find the idea taking this form of embodiment very clearly and maintaining it persistently, and in some of her offspring we find it evincing the same tendency. But once embodied in such a universal church, what is the result? Let Neander tell us: "When the doctrine of the universal priesthood retired into the background, the consecration which all men should make of their entire lives went along with it." In other words, the universal church, though swaying the destinies of never so many thousands, instead of thoroughly evangelizing them does not stay evangelized itself. Making evangelization and induction within its pale substantial equivalents, there being in its estimation no salvation out of the church, it has resorted to all manner of expedients for the accomplishment of this result; now sending forth its priests with an army and banners to compel where it cannot persuade, now presenting a gorgeous ritual to move upon the senses of the vulgar or the sensual, and always, where it can, coalescing with the State that it may use political power for the enforcement of its behests. Among the cultivated and enlightened, it wears an aspect of refinement; among the pagan and degraded, it is correspondingly idolatrous and degraded. Hence, in the far east, its ceremonials, in many respects, are hardly distinguishable from those of the pagans. Indeed, in Rome itself, if we may credit such observers as Dean Trench,

who spent a winter there, the state of public morality will equal "the darkest passages in paganism." It opposes the free use of the Scriptures by the common people, and arrays itself against any system of public education which it cannot control for the enslavement of the masses to the hierarchy. The Dark Ages are the flowering and fruitage of its evangelizing potency. An infallible and all-dominating Pope, whose toe can sway the abject homage of the masses, and who is sustained by a horde of Jesuits who teach the religious inferior to be as subject to the superior as a walking-stick is to him who uses it, or a corpse to him who handles it, is the befitting crown or Pontifex Maximus to the whole. If a people robbed of freedom and intelligence, and subjected to the iron rule of a fellow-man who has vaulted into the place of the "one Lord," are evangelized, then the universal church idea has been a success. Otherwise it must be conceded to have been a lamentable failure.

The invisible church idea, as represented by Protestants, may seem to be the redemption of this failure. It is associated with the strongest historical protestations against the church of Rome and its inquisitorial system. It emphasizes spirit as against form in religion. It is non-sacramental. It must be conceded to have had the world's best examples of Christian devotion in its favor. The reformation of the sixteenth century was born of it. The Protestant denominations of to-day are generally its patrons and supporters. And yet, in itself as an evangelizing potency, we must pronounce it as decided a failure as the universal

idea. Those who have embraced it have been noble evangelizers. They are to-day girdling the globe with missions which are elevating the nations immeasurably, as well as opening the kingdom of heaven to their subjects. But they have done whatever they have accomplished, not by virtue of this idea, but in spite of it. Men holding to the invisible church idea have organized into local or particular churches and missionary bodies, and done wonders as evangelizers, but as invisible church-men they have done nothing. It was not an invisible, but a visible and organized church, through which the inspired Paul expected "the manifold wisdom of God" to be made known to even "principalities and powers in heavenly places." The invisible church, in itself, sends out no missionaries and distributes no Bibles. It is like the great oceans whose waters, though enveloping two-thirds of the globe, fertilize not a plant on any of the earth's islands or continents until, by some organized force, they are lifted from their beds and conveyed to the very roots and fibres of vegetation. The great mountains, thrusting their condensing heads up into the clouds of vapor which the winds have borne over the mainland, and turning them downward into ten thousand brooklets and rivers, which go meandering through gigantic forests and broad, smiling valleys, are like the local and organized churches or missionary societies, which utilize the water of life in the possession of the so-called invisible church, and make it transform the face of the inhabited world. So far from doing evangelizing work, this invisible church idea hinders it just to

the extent to which it discourages the organization of forces, or their being organized and panoplied according to the revealed intention. Every truth of God found in the volume of revelation has undoubtedly its evangelizing uses. Hence the Saviour would not tolerate the destruction of one jot or tittle of the law, and rigorously enjoined the teaching of all things he had commanded. But that this idea has encouraged the destruction of some truth, by fostering indifference to those points in which denominations differ from each other, cannot be denied. It is, therefore, in this as well as in its non-organizing and confusing tendency, a hinderance to the work of evangelizing the world. The sacramental host of Christ's redeemed subjects, in order to their greatest evangelizing success, need personally to be as thoroughly spiritualized and developed by gospel appliances as possible, and organized in the most thorough accord with the spiritual forces which have wrought in them, and must work in others, if they produce the saving and ennobling effects intended by the world's Redeemer. In the condition implied by the term *invisible church*, however, they possess neither of these requisites. They are simply cloudy masses of vapor floating in air, and not hot and confined steam, driving the engines of power over land and main. Or they are simply culture and refinement scattered promiscuously through society, rather than culture and refinement harnessed into common-school and college systems, literary institutes and theological seminaries, for the education and refinement of the masses. As we conceive, it is quite possible that the

invisible church idea may be pressed so far, that not only may organized forces for culture and evangelization cease, but the very spirituality which has been and is the beau ideal of its excellency may become as thoroughly corrupted and hence ineffectual as has that of the one Catholic or universal church.

We turn more hopefully to the local idea. It possesses no inherent tendency to either hierarchy or sacramentalism. It does possess an inherent tendency to individualism, democracy and loyalty to the word of God. It hence naturally adopts and works the doctrine of the universal priesthood, and brings to it the best of forces. Emphasizing spirituality as much as the invisible-church theorists do, it escapes their disorganizing tendencies and brings its forces, unweakened by them, into the great fight of faith. It may not, at first thought, appear to be as well adapted to do extensive and rapid work as those organizations which thoroughly subordinate the local society to a central power, but this is rather appearance than fact, if all modifying circumstances are taken into the account. There is nothing in the local idea itself to hinder a thorough organization of forces for any kind of aggressive movement upon the enemy of righteousness, the local churches all the while maintaining their independence, and there is very much in that independence maintained, in its effect upon personal character and qualification for work, which is all important. The Methodist Episcopal church is a good illustration of power centralized and growth rapid, but already its career has brought anxiety to many hearts concerning

its ability to perpetuate the thoroughly evangelical spirit and the personal consecration of its members with which it began. Moreover, as a foreign evangelizer it has never been conspicuous. The Baptist churches of the United States and other countries are good examples of the local idea at work, and, while they have shown no inferiority to any in the work of either home or foreign evangelization, they alarm no one with any inherent tendency, as yet discovered, to deterioration in either doctrine or personal Christian character. Nay, we may state the matter more strongly. They lead the world in successful foreign missions, and they are annually improving in all that belongs to the growth of saints toward "the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." They are perhaps a little weakened by the partial sway of the invisible-church idea, but this weakness, we apprehend, will be only incidental and temporary.

We know of nothing, either in personal qualifications or organized effort, requisite to the world's evangelization which may not be secured to the best possible advantage in connection with the local church idea. We would not claim that all has been secured as yet, for the idea has had no fair and thorough test of its ability. But like republicanism in the State, it may be said to be fairly in the ascendant, and its evangelizing power suffers no loss of reputation. We confidently look to it for the subjugation of the world to Christ. We confidently expect glory to "Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end," will be the result of the achievements of local churches. Their

divine architect has, we doubt not, fitly framed them, so that personal freedom and governmental authority, individual development and organized movement, are duly and most effectively adjusted for the world's evangelization. At all events—and here we leave the discussion—the universal and the invisible church ideas are both failures, and the local idea must carry its auspiciously begun work to the desired consummation, or we know not where to look for the world's evangelization.

CHAPTER II.

GOVERNMENTAL IDEAS.—ADVANTAGES OF OUR PLAN.

WE cannot doubt that the mode of officering and governing the church developed in Part Second, was given by infinite wisdom as at once the most natural, feasible and flexible: natural, for it is that in substance for which multitudes are to-day blindly struggling, who would stretch the church constitution so as to make it cover more than it has been accustomed to do, and other multitudes unwittingly seeking, who would so organize their church forces as to increase their efficiency; feasible, because it can be worked anywhere where there is material enough to make a church, were it even in an army always on the move; and flexible, because, while it encourages all Christians to seek earnestly the best gifts, it also encourages churches to do the best they can with such gifts as they possess. Had the mode always been adhered to, ages of darkness might have been avoided by the sacramental host and victories innumerable gained. It is remarkable, that almost every great departure from the simplicity and spirituality of New Testament church life has originated in some infringement of this simple scheme. We cannot doubt that before "incense and a pure offering are offered in *every place*," according to the bright vision of prophecy,

or before the doctrine of the "royal priesthood" of all God's people comes to be thoroughly embodied, this plan will be restored. But let us specify a few of its advantages, frankly conceding, meanwhile, that we do not anticipate entire exemption from trouble on any plan, perfection itself being no infallible stay.

Section I.—Stability and Safety to the Church.

Church stability has usually been purchased at the expense of the spiritual power of the members. The process has been to substitute for the primitive democracy a form of government which approximates more or less closely to a monarchy, which is called a "strong government." The multitude have thus been relieved of prerogatives which the few have absorbed, and the unvarying result has been that which Neander ascribes to the Romish policy,—the retirement to the background of "the consecration which all Christians should make of their entire lives." In short, "the dark ages" resulted to Rome, and, in at least some sombre shadows cast over the spiritual life of the church, will always result. It is not among the possibilities of nature, that a high degree of intelligent spirituality should long continue to be diffused among the members of a church, after they have been relieved or deprived of responsibility in its government; for the simple reason that spiritual power, like physical, is the result, in some measure, of taxation.

But the special problem before us is, how to maintain the stability and spiritual safety of a church whose government is the democratic.

The great danger to which civil democracies have always been exposed is popular seditions. They were the bane of the Athenian government in all its earlier history. We see a very strong tendency toward them among the Israelites in the wilderness, whose government, though not strictly democratic, yet approximated somewhat near it. The danger is one of the prices which we have to pay for civil freedom. And notwithstanding the divine life which must ever be the great governing power in the church, the "every kind" gathered by the gospel net includes material enough for some disturbance from the same source. Indeed, this is the great source of trouble. It is too much to assume that every person is competent to use the power which an unconditioned democracy gives him, especially when we remember the emphasis placed by the Head of the church upon diverse gifts and functions. Hence, we have only to imagine a want or a perversion of life-power, such as we often find in individual cases, and we have all that is needful to trouble in abundance. A single willful, heady man may create a sedition which a hundred saints could not allay. Ignorance and conceit may prove far mightier than wisdom and humility. Alas! alas! how many once flourishing churches have found themselves utterly unable to resist the shock of seditions, feeble, wicked and contemptible in their beginnings!

Now, our second method was devised for the express purpose of meeting this difficulty, with others, and so giving stability and safety to government. After a long period of seditions, Athens passed her most bril-

liant career under its protection, as devised by the great Solon. Under the same method substantially, though with more power in the Senate, and with a third safeguard in two supreme magistrates called *suffetes*, Carthage had flourished in internal tranquility, according to Aristotle, for five hundred years prior to his time, and did not cease from her glory for two hundred years thereafter. The advantages of the method to the State are inestimable, marshaling popular forces so successfully as to protect them against themselves, their worst enemies. And of no less advantage is it to a Christian church where, if not in degree at least in kind, the same danger exists. In answer to inquiries as to methods of doing church business, one of the oldest settled and most successful pastors in any of our large city churches said:

"My policy is to do only in committee of the whole what must be done there, and make that as little as possible."

Said another not less prominent or successful, in another large city, a man of continental reputation:

"Anything that needs to be brought before the church for action, is suggested by the pastor and deacons at the covenant meeting or some other regular appointment. Business meetings are obsolete with us. We are thus saved a world of trouble, and, for aught I know, get along pretty well." They both know the danger, and both, so far as they do not diminish business, resort substantially to our second method to avoid it. They only fail in substituting a board of deacons for a board of elders. Let a board of elders

stand related to the assembly as a senate stands related to a house of representatives, and let it be understood that business is to be transacted in an orderly way, and our churches will need, neither to shun business, nor to abate any legitimate freedom of the members by a change in the form of government. But it is a gross perversion of freedom to put the poorest and most unreliable talents in the church upon a perfect level with the best, as is done in the committee-of-the-whole plan of conducting a democracy. It is for a church indifferently to assent to the use of freedom as a "vail of wickedness," and that in the very face of all the Scriptures say upon diversity of gifts. It is for "the woman" utterly to decline help, from either "the earth" or the Word. What wonder if instability and spiritual lethargy or war result!

Section II.—Thoroughness of Deliberation.

It is an old adage, that whatever is worth doing is worth doing well. This is emphatically true in religion. Churches owe it to the cause of God and human development, that they do what business needs attention, and do it well.

But it needs no lengthened argument to prove, that repeated deliberations by different bodies are more likely to thoroughly master a subject than a single deliberation by a single body. Hence the circuitous routine of all legislative bodies, passing the same bill through the hands of standing committees, both houses, and the president or governor. Committee-of the-whole digestion is found to be utterly inadequate.

And no less so is it in the church. Haste often makes waste. If Thomas Jefferson took his idea of a form of government for the United States from a little Baptist church in his neighborhood, he certainly did not run that idea in the direction of committee-of-the-whole legislation, as do many of both little and large Baptist churches. But we need not enlarge. Suffice it to say, that, while we do not blindly assume that churches need to have frequent business meetings and transact an enormous amount of business, we do assume that, if they would do thoroughly what they have to do, they must adopt our second method. And, in our judgment, it would be much more noble and Christian to do it openly and formally than for pastors to resort to private substitutes, as they sometimes do.

Section III.—Work Done.

While many things will be done best by leaving every person to his own suggestions of duty, some things of public importance would never be done thus. Hence the felt need of organization throughout Christendom in order to facilitate or augment labor done. It is indispensable to our great missionary and other benevolent work, and not less so to that of the individual church. The office of deacon was instituted for this very end, as was doubtless every other office in the Christian church, that of plural eldership not excepted. Churches of any size need more pastoral labor, more supervision of benevolence, better care for the sick and needy, and more preaching than any single modern pastor can give. According to some

authorities, a Jewish synagogue was not to be planted where less than ten "men of leisure" could be relied upon, that is, ten men from whom an eldership could be selected, men who could and would devote their time to its work. Multitudes of our churches are suffering fearfully for the want of similar men. Paul never went forth on his missionary tours without his helpers, and it is utterly absurd to strip a minister of all helps,—men officially so recognized,—and put him single-handed and alone at the head of the host of Israel. If he be not stoned by the people, he certainly will fail to do all for them which needs to be done.

SECTION IV.—EQUALIZATION OF RESPONSIBILITY AND AUTHORITY.

The common method of putting a single man into the pastorate, with neither cabinet of advisers nor helpers, loading him with a fearful responsibility and yet stripping him of all official authority, and making him the prey of every faction, is simply cruel and absurd. We plead for no authority in any man's hands which transcends his responsibility, but we do plead for straw where the tale of brick is to be furnished, for representation proportionate to taxation. To place a man at the head of a church as teacher and leader, to confront him at every step, as is often done, with the tacit if not active denial of the very privileges or rights essential to his work, is a species of oppression which has few equals. It is one of the secrets of short pastorates, universally mourned and universally compelled. Not to justify the courses of all ministers, we

think it not too much to say, that the career of many is simply a succession of decapitations at the hands of inconsiderate brethren, who cannot, it may be, allow them the undisputed privilege of even conducting a prayer meeting as their own judgments and rights as leaders might dictate. Methodist ministers have too much authority; Baptist, too little. The average Baptist minister, in utter defiance of Baptist sentiment respecting a divine call to the work, is a hireling, as the customary use of the term *hire* indicates. He stands as such in the feelings of the people, who watch him, and criticize him, and demand of him the impossibility of exerting a controlling influence whose indispensable official conditions they deny, and who dismiss him at pleasure. Now we assert, without fear of logical contradiction, that any man who stands thus related to a church cannot do the full work of one of Christ's teachers. Leadership is demanded where the right to lead is denied; shepherding is demanded where the right to shepherd is denied; overseeing is demanded where the privilege of being overseen is only accorded. The conflict is irrepressible until official authority can be elevated to the level of official responsibility, which our second method will help to do, and that without the abatement of a particle of the power which rightfully belongs to the people. Not to continue the discussion, let us compare current speech in the apostles day and ours, as a method of showing how far below the New Testament standard the authority of church officials has fallen. Paul and Silas, as they journeyed through the cities, "delivered to them the decrees to

keep, that were ordained by the apostles and elders who were in Jerusalem." (*Acts* XVI: 4). Now imagine the Baptist church in Toledo sending to that in Adrian for counsel on an important question of doctrine or duty, and the decision given by the latter church being called the decree of the pastor and—not elders, for it has but one at any time, and not always one—deacons or prudential committee. Whose ears would not tingle? A word to the wise is sufficient. Current speech is a revelation; a board of elders the needed correction.

SECTION V.—"PASTORLESS INTERREGNUMS."

According to the Baptist Year Book for 1875, there are eight thousand one hundred and fifty-six (8156) more Baptist churches in the United States than there are ordained ministers. Balancing, then, the number of ordained ministers not employed in pastoral work against the number of churches which have the services of only parts of men, we may pretty safely conjecture that not far from this same number of churches are without pastors, in fact without any spiritual heads, plodding, floating, or floundering through the trying and hazardous period of a pastorless interregnum. Alluding to the troubles encountered by several prominent New England churches, a leading correspondent of the New York *Examiner and Chronicle*, under date of Nov. 30, 1871, nervously asks: "What can be done to save our churches from the disasters of pastorless interregnums?" Though not expecting entire exemp-

tion from trouble on any plan, we would, nevertheless, like to suggest, as an answer to the inquiry, "the Lord's plural eldership." With it, the teacher's office might be vacant, but a pastorless interregnum could never occur. The churches could never present the sad spectacle of headless trunks, wallowing in the dust of discord, or ceasing entirely life's avocations to simulate the syncope or contortions of the dying. The houses of God could all be kept open, and their worship and ordinances observed. The saints need not fold their hands as having nothing to do, or do things they ought not for the want of something better. Converts need not stand shivering at the church door, because there is no one to bid them come in. The Lord's table need not be neglected, because only the one man who cannot be had is wanting. How our practices impeach the common sense of both ourselves and our ascended Lord! What a burning disgrace, for which every church in the land guilty of it ought to be clothed in sackcloth and ashes, that the doors of the Lord's house should ever be closed, like those of the temple of Janus in times of peace, as though the followers of Jesus had negotiated a peace with those of Satan! What an insult to both logic and exegesis, that Baptists should present over eight thousand headless trunks to the civilized world as thoroughly and scripturally organized bodies, ready for the activities of church life! Pastorless interregnums! What are our churches thinking of! Spiking their guns! Rotting down! Or, worse still, engaging in internecine war! Alas! Alas!

SECTION VI.—PERMANENCY OF THE PASTORAL RELATION.

Volumes have been written and immeasurably more felt with reference to short pastorates. While no sensible person could claim that every minister is adapted to an unchangeable pastorate, the general verdict is, that an immense amount of harm results from the present frequency of changes. And a great variety of prescriptions is given for the malady, though all, as yet, to little or no purpose. Change goes steadily on, as though controlled, as doubtless it is, by some overmastering law like that of gravitation. It is as indifferent to pleas and censures as is the mountain iceberg to the winds and waves, when it is borne on by the resistless under-currents of the ocean. Passion is too much for judgment, and feeling for principle. Churches sacrifice ministers to gratify the caprice of insignificant and often wicked minorities, hoping the sea will be calm to them after they have cast some one overboard for Jonah, and ministers speculate in churches, oblivious of divine calls, and vainly hoping a change of position may ease a present burden. Evidently some unrealized potency needs to be introduced or the current views upon the permanency of the pastoral relation to be changed.

Now we do not propose to advocate any special change of view, nor do we suppose that we shall be able to introduce a potency which will cause the ecclesiastical machinery to run without friction, stoppage or breakage. Nevertheless, we do suppose that

the New Testament eldership, related to him we call pastor as we have indicated, and employed according to the divine intention, would serve as a very important balance-wheel. Sharing the labors and counselings of the pastor, it would also share any unhallowed opposition which might be offered, and thus mitigate its personal severity. The spiritual head would be complex rather than single. Again, aiding his defects and making up in a measure for his deficiencies, it would remove the occasions for complaint. Moreover, ministering to his wants in a variety of ways, it would allay unrest upon his own part, which might otherwise result in removal. And last, but not least, giving character and dignity to the spiritual head of a body which often suffers from disproportion between the two, it would minister force and so permanency to that head.

These are plain, unvarnished statements, but we think they touch matters much more vital to the pastoral relation than the mere matter of support or the other causes of change usually urged. We must not blind our eyes to the fact, that few ministers possess the full rounded ability which the teacher's office demands. Many can teach better than they can preach, or preach better than they can teach. Many can fill the pulpit who cannot visit well. Many can visit well who cannot preside well in a business meeting, and thus avoid the reefs and snags upon which the vessel might easily wreck. None can be both church and pastor, and do all things. And, on the other hand, churches must be led. If the proper spiritual head be wanting, some other proper or improper one will be jostled into the position

vacated, the whole body trembling or shaking as if by an earthquake, meanwhile, it may be, or lapsing into stupidity and inactivity as if fed on a narcotic. What, then, is to be done? Leadership is demanded, and leadership in the full sense meant is not secured. "Change and try again," is the universal receipt. But change only echoes to change without meeting the wants felt, in the majority of instances. We say, adopt the New Testament eldership, and thus supplement the defects of one man by the talents of others. Do as we do in civil government,—not say, that the President of the United States must amplify himself sufficiently to embody a cabinet and two houses of Congress, but give him his Aarons and Hurs, and be content if he maintain his position well under such more favorable circumstances.

We are aware that a variety of objections will be urged which we are not careful to answer, otherwise than by a reference to the court of common sense. Defects in an eldership would doubtless, at times, become sources of unrest and possibly of change, but as a rule, we believe, the teacher could get along with them as well or better there than in the church at large, while, from the time of the appointment of Moses' seventy elders down to the present day, the verdict of history favors the principle we have been advocating.

Section VII.—Supply of Ministers.

With over eight thousand more Baptist churches than ordained Baptist ministers in the United States, and with a deficiency of the latter increasing nearly

one-third per decade, what wonder that our people take alarm and ask: What is to be done? Neither mourning nor scolding, praying the little we do to the Lord of the harvest for laborers, nor wistfully looking to our colleges and seminaries as men look to lotteries, with more chances against than for, calling for lay preachers, nor as yet the potency of educational commissions suffices to fill the painful void. All these are well in their place, but the sad fact remains,—the great void becomes broader, deeper and more gloomy.

Conceding now the difficulty of foretelling the results of events, let us notice a few facts. 1. We have but one class or grade of ministers of the Word—pastors, bishops or elders. 2. The Scriptures, as we have seen, have more,—first, apostles; secondly, prophets; thirdly, evangelist-teachers or teachers, and fourthly, pastors and teachers, pastor-teachers or elders. Moreover, though we should not feel justified in saying that they require any specific order of promotion, it cannot be denied that the Twelve were preachers before they were either teachers or apostles, and that some of the evangelists or teachers, such as Timothy and Titus, appear to have followed a similar order of ascent. 3. It appears to be a fact that those denominations which have a graded ministry, however faulty they may be in either their grading, their doctrines, or their practice in other respects, have less difficulty in the matter under consideration than others. Roman Catholics have a superabundance of ministers, we judge, though they go with every advancing tide of settlement, and penetrate almost every forbidding nook and corner of all the

continents and islands. Mormons even suffer no lack, it would seem, though their elders are subject to orders from their president at any time, to go, at their own charges and hazard, to the ends of the earth. The Episcopal Methodists, in 1870, had 7,861 more ministers than churches, counting their three grades, while counting only their traveling preachers, they were better supplied than Baptists. The Protestant Episcopals had, in 1870, a surplus of 52 ministers.* The Disciples, in 1860, had an equal number of ministers and churches. The Presbyterians, in 1870, had a deficiency of only one minister to fourteen and four-tenths churches, (1 : 14.4),† while the Baptists' deficiency was as one to two and five-tenths, (1 : 2.5),‡ and had increased since 1860 nearly one-third.

Now these are facts. Have they any lessons for us Baptists? We should be slow to admit that, by their doctrines or spirituality, the other denominations impart a stronger impulse toward the ministry. Nor could we justly claim that our ministers are more poorly paid or generally less fruitful than all others; for, while statistics show their pay to be moderate as compared with others, they also show their numerical fruits to be scarcely equaled by any. How then can we account for the difference in ministerial numbers except we concede that, in the matter of gradation, they have a superior potency for putting men into the ministry? That gradation is a potency, we need only refer to

* Surplus of 409 in 1875.
† Only 1 : 17.9 in 1875.
‡ 1 : 2.6 in 1875.

railroad, army or governmental affairs. That it may be a dangerous potency, we may also concede. But that, under the limitations of a well defined order, it is a Scriptural potency no one can deny. Suppose then we were to introduce it by introducing the classification of church officers we have advocated, who shall say that, instead of asking who shall serve our churches in the ministry, we might not have occasion to say with Paul, "if any man *desire* the office of overseer?" The church at Antioch had such a surplus of ministerial gifts, that when needed, the Holy Spirit had only to say, "Set apart for me Paul and Barnabas to the work to which I have called them." Why not many of our churches have an available surplus? We must not forget that our works should go with our prayers for laborers in the Lord's harvest field, and that among the most potent of all possible things is a simple order or institute. The great Athenian lawgiver, Solon, would not have a statute against parricide, because "to make laws against, and ordain punishments for a crime which had never been heard of or known, was the way to introduce it, rather than to prevent it." So of the ministry we may say, that its existence tends to produce ministers, while its graded existence tends to produce them in the larger numbers which the inspiration of degrees recognized in "seeking earnestly the best gifts," or the "double honor" bestowed upon teaching elders, may add. Nor would the tendency be toward an inferior order of ministers, the inspiration all being toward the best gifts, and circumstances then being more favorable to their cultivation. "In former

days," says Prof. Park of Andover Theological Seminary, "the parishes of New England allowed their pastors time for retirement and study. Many of these pastors made such acquirements in knowledge as overran the boundaries of their profession, and stimulated the most energetic young men to enter the pastoral office." It could hardly be said now, that the churches give their ministers time to study, when rolling upon them the duties of a whole board of elders in addition to their own. Dr. Schaff castes an implied stigma upon Baptist ministers for their non-acquaintance with ecclesiastical history, save as it is related to the subject of baptism. They must have time, if he be correct, to acquaint themselves, as we feel assured they have the inclination. But how can time be more easily or safely furnished, than by giving them the helps which the Lord gave Moses,—a board of elders?

Not then to argue further, the following results might consistently be expected to follow the introduction of the scriptural classification of offices:

1. In the plural eldership, every one of the more than 8,000 destitute churches might have a spiritual, ministerial head such as gifts possessed would warrant, thus augumenting ministerial force at once and immensely.
2. In this new and intermediate ministerial office; many of those brethren might find a place of usefulness who feel themselves called to the ministry, but can see no way to the high ideal position they figure to themselves, and who, in consequence, pass their lives unhappily under the goadings of an unsatisfied conscience.
3. Finding here a place of usefulness and also of stim-

ulation, they might at length find their way, as we have previously indicated, into the higher office of teacher, thus accomplishing by degrees what they would have despaired of accomplishing by a single stride. 4. In the eldership, also, might a class of men find a congenial and useful place who are themselves discouraged, and who disappoint the churches by assuming prematurely the burdens of the pastoral office. 5. Our eldership would furnish an easy and orderly solution of the question of lay preaching, the place for lay preachers being in a board of elders, where they have appropriate church recognition and sanction. 6. We might expect a general improvement of gifts, not simply from their increased use and mutual stimulation, but also from the consequent demand for college and seminary courses of study. In short, we believe that the scriptual order would as silently and surely furnish the increase of ministerial force needed by the churches, as the noiseless but towering mountain ranges give us the brooks and rivers which meander through and fructify our intervening plains and valleys.

Section VIII.—Simplicity.

Not less in ecclesiastical than in any other machinery, is simplicity a commendation. But what could be more simple than the scheme we have indicated, which makes the needful offices of the fully or, perhaps we should say, most highly organized church to be three —teacher, elders and deacons; the first having general superintendence and with the elders constituting the church senate; the second being counsellors and fellow-

workers with the first, or chief spiritual leaders in his absence; and the third, helpers to both, by way of attending to the secularities of the body? Boards of trustees, ministerial and all other ordinary committees are thus rendered unnecessary, while the church is organized and equipped for work in every department, as well as seeking earnestly the best gifts. A board of trustees, representing the legalized society, a body distinct from the church, as though that body were incompetent to manage its own affairs, always confuses minds. Not one-half the members of our churches can clearly see their relation to the church. Ministerial and other committees, extemporized to meet emergencies, and for which a board of elders is the divine and standing provision, for the want of practical skill will generally do their business only tolerably well, and are often complications in the machinery which create not a little friction, besides consuming time and retarding results. Simplicity then, a simplicity for which every thoughtful mind instinctively longs, which "the earth" labored centuries to attain, and which the Holy Spirit has most unequivocally approved, this thrice commended and always potent simplicity, is the last but not least advantage we will name of the scheme advocated.

Conceding again, then, that we anticipate entire exemption from trouble on no scheme, either human or divine, so long as human nature is what it is, and the Christian church, with the whole scheme of redemption, is a standing confession of its troublesomeness, and would have no occasion to exist were the case other-

wise, we must think that such advantages, added to the evident scripturalness of the plan and, we may also add, the evident unscripturalness of any other yet introduced, ought to commend it to every one who, in the church constitution as in his own private life, desires to "go on to perfection."

SUPPLEMENT

ON ORDINATION.

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SUPPLEMENT—ON ORDINATION.

CHAPTER I.

ORDINATION.

OWING to a variety of causes, the subject of ministerial ordination has come to be involved in no little obscurity. The very word *ordination* misleads, having acquired a technicality of meaning which the various words in New Testament Greek, of which it is the rendering in our common version, by no means warrant. It is not possible that a technical ecclesiastical sense should belong to a word which, in a recurrence of twenty times, is the rendering of twelve radically different words or expressions. The very use of a term to represent so many different terms, confesses an undue partiality for it, an attempt to crowd into it that which does not rightfully belong to it.

Again, the different views which have prevailed respecting both the ministerial office and the church to which it belongs, have necessitated either confusion of ideas or more radically different practices than now prevail. If we do not greatly mistake, Protestantism has not quite cleared its skirts of Romanism upon this subject.

It will be our endeavor to aid in the clearance while we make a few original inquiries concerning the main subject.

Section I.—As to the Nature of Ordination.

The term *ordination* is from the Latin *ordo*, a row, line, order, series. To ordain is to put one into a place in an order or series, or, to use Webster's definition, "to establish in a particular office or order; hence to invest with a ministerial function or sacerdotal power." The question now arises as to the nature of this induction into official place and power, whether it is by the sacramental impartation of grace or character, called consecration, or by an election of which the imposition of hands and its attendant ceremonies are the solemnization, or by mere ministerial recognition. In brief, is ordination an election, a consecration, or only a recognition? These are the current views.

Section II.—Romish View.

Romanism and kindred systems answer either or both questions: 'A consecration.' With Romanists ordination is called *Sacramentum ordinis*. In their view, the Sacraments of the New Testament, in consequence of the death of Christ, have obtained what is called *virtus instrumentalis*, or *effectiva*, that is, the power to impart character to the recipient, which character, in the case of the ordained, is said to be *indelibilis*, that is ineffaceable or perpetual. He who receives it is qualified to administer in the sacred office, however

loudly his subsequent immoral conduct may protest against him, (*Hag. His. of Doctrines II*: 80). In just what part of the consecrating act this character-imparting power resides, whether in the symbols used, such as laying on of hands, the annointing, etc., or in the act at large, is not well defined, but there is no question as to its belonging to some part. Nor is it abstractly a thing of slight importance. With Romanists, the church is the only medium of approach to Christ, there being absolutely no salvation out of it; the sacraments are the all-essential parts of the church's appliances for transferring Christ's life and image to those who approach him through the church; and ordination is the sacrament of sacraments by which the priesthood, a veritable priesthood which offers the real body and blood of Christ in sacrifice, are empowered to administer sacraments; hence ordination is the vital thing in the whole system; and hence, too, the emphasis laid upon the succession apostolic. Upon ordination everything depends. (*Neand. Ch. His. I*, 210).

Section III.—Major Protestant View.

Protestants who hold not that men come to Christ through the church, but that they come to the church through Christ, (*Hag. His. Doc.* 2, 290), have generally, naturally and logically, though not always clearly, held that ordination is *an election.* We say they have not always clearly held this view. Sometimes a separation is made between the election proper and its solemnization, the term *vocation* or *election* being ap-

plied to the former and *ordination* to the latter; the cause doubtless being the unconscious sway of the consecration theory, and the result a strong tendency, as illustrated in the recognition theory, back to the same. If any appropriate force be allowed to the term *ordain*, whose common meaning Webster defines by such words as *appoint*, *decree*, *establish*, *institute* and *constitute*, this of itself should correct the error, for certainly the former part of the transaction is, in these senses, especially the ordaining part. But whether or not a separation of ideas occur, the ordaining transaction is the same, and is covered by our form of expression,—an election, of which the imposition of hands and its attendant ceremonies are the solemnization.

Hence Tyndale's, Cranmer's, and the Genevan versions of the English Bible rendered the all-important passage in Acts XIV: 23: "When they had ordained them elders *by election*," a rendering which "the prevalence of prelacy expurgated from the common version." (*Ecclesia*, 109). Hence, too, Martin Luther, who held that all Christians were born priests, and that the minister in office differed from the others only in having been commissioned and approved by those to whom he was to minister, in order to make his idea of ordination plain, said: "If a company of pious Christian laymen were captured and sent to a desert place, and had not among them an ordained priest, and were all agreed in the matter, and elected one, and told him to baptize, administer the mass, absolve, and preach, such an one would be as true a priest, as if all the bish-

ops and popes had ordained him." (*Hag. His. Doc's, II.*, 294). By way of approval and confirmation of Luther's view, Dr. George Christian Knapp, an eminent theologian of the last century, said, "the right to teach does not depend upon ordination, (the formal part), but upon vocation," which he had previously defined as "the naming and consecration of any one to the office of teaching." (*Chr. Theol.*, 477). Not a few notable men, connected as was Archbishop Cranmer with a branch of Protestantism which is strongly allied to Rome in its emphasis of the Apostolic Succession, have concurred in his opinion, which, more fully stated than in the scripture quoted, was, that "he that is appointed to be a bishop or priest, needeth no consecration by the scripture, for election or appointing thereto is sufficient."

Baptists have quite generally concurred in the same view, so far as we are able to learn. John Smith's church, of London, which put forth a confession in 1611, (*Cramp's His. of the Bap's*, 289), the seven churches of London, which issued their confession in 1643, and "Many Congregations in London and Vicinity," whose confession of 1689 was adopted by the Philadelphia Association of this country as early, probably, as 1724, all teach it, (*Cutting's Vind. of Baps.* 16 3). As their confessions are all of the same tenor, an explanatory extract from an appended discipline of the Philadelphia Association will suffice. "After having taken all due care to choose one for the work of the ministry, they (the church) are, by and with the unanimous consent or suffrage of the church,

to proceed to his ordination; which is a solemn setting apart of such a person to the sacred function, in this wise: by setting apart a day of fasting and prayer, the whole church being present, he is to have the hands of the presbytery of that church, or of neighboring elders called and authorized by that church, whereof such a person is a member, solemnly laid upon him; and thus such a person is to be recommended into the work of the Lord, and to take particular care of the flock of whom he is thus chosen." (*Cutting's Vind.* 203). To these witnesses we may add from the present generation such names as Ripley, Pendleton and Hayne. Prof. Ripley says: "The essence of an ordination consists in a church's calling to the work of the ministry one of its members, who possesses, substantially, the requisite qualifications." (*Church Polity*, 164). Mr. Hayne says: "The essential act in ordination is her (the church's) election of him for the purpose." (*Bap. Denom.*, 250).

Congregationalists, whether in the Puritan or Pilgrim line, have held the same view with great tenacity. Of the Puritans of the Elizabethan age, Neal says, they held first to election and then to ordination "to that charge whereunto he (the ordained) is chosen by the prayers of that church whereunto he is to be admitted." (*His. of the Pur's, II.*, 440). John Robinson said, that "ordination is properly the execution of election." (*Backus' His. of the Baps. I.*, 14). And the Cambridge Platform, in perfect accord with its antecedents, uses the following language: "This ordination we account nothing else, but the solemn putting a

man into his place and office in the church, whereunto he had right before by election." (*Chap. IX.*, 2; *cf. Mather's Magnalia, II.*, 208).

According to this view, the doings of an ordination council are but a solemn consummation of a church's election previously taken, and hypothecated, possibly, upon the concurrence of the council. The council is not a sovereign power, but acts as the servant of the church. It is not even an indispensable servant, as is more than implied in the quotations made above, and was clearly expressed by Andrew Fuller, when he said: "The only end for which I join in an ordination, is to unite with the elders of that and other churches in expressing my brotherly concurrence in the election, which, if it fell on what I counted an unsound or unworthy character, I should withhold."

The view, properly stated, also retains the radical sense of ordain, and does not eclipse or confound the substance of a most important transaction with a distorted and most shadowy part, thus betraying a strong affinity for Rome.

Section IV.—Minor Protestant View.

The remaining theory we have to notice makes ordination to mean *recognition*. The following statement of it, from Hiscox' Baptist Church Directory, is doubtless fair and impartial: "Ordination as now practiced, does not pretend to confer any authority, rights, abilities or power on the candidate, either by churches or councils, but in a formal and solemn manner to *recognize* him as one whom God has called, and the church

has chosen to the work of the ministry, and to give him the sanction and encouragement of their approbation in it," (*p.* 69). The view is evidently modern in its origin, and the product, not of New Testament exegesis, but of circumstances. The factors in its production, as we conjecture, are, on the one hand, a disinclination to accept the Romish theory, and, on the other, the displacement of a church presbytery by a representative council, and a like displacement of a church office by a general ministry among the churches conceived to be represented. The last change was the easy result of the loss of the church presbytery, and the influence of surrounding denominations having other than the Congregational theory of church organization. But whether or not our conjecture as to the origin of the theory be correct, the displacements noticed are involved in it, and are of themselves sufficient, as we think, to condemn it. And besides, though intended to be an escape from the Romish theory, it is a blind retreat into its very arms. It is subject to the criticism made by Dr. Knapp upon a practice of his time. "There is one practice in the Protestant church," said he, "which is a real remnant of popery, viz.: that an ordained person may still teach and administer the sacraments, even when he no longer properly fills an office as a teacher of religion, as if ordination put a *character indelibilis* upon a person; while the truth is, that the permission and the right to discharge these duties depend upon a person's vocation to the sacred office, and not upon his ordination," terms being used as before explained. (*Chr. Theol.* 478).

But while we treat this view as a theory of ordination, a moment's reflection will show that it is rather a substitute. The term *recognition* has the force of ordination in neither its etymological, ecclesiastical nor common sense. In each and all of these varied significations, to ordain is to pass authority, in some sense, from one party to another. The merchant who but appoints another as his clerk does as much. The idea is ingrained in the term *ordain* itself. Not so, however, in the case of recognition. It implies the transmission of authority in no sense, as the statement of the theory we are considering well says. Nor does it fill any office. It simply takes cognizance of facts; says what is found. To say this solemnly is to say it impressively, but it is to say nothing more or less. In the language of the statement quoted, it says, in case of ordination: "God has called and the church has chosen (such an one) to the work of the ministry." To this the council may add "the sanction and encouragement of their approbation," and this may be of great value to more parties than one, but it all involves not so much as the shadow of an appointment or transmission of authority, and hence is no ordination. It does not approach as near to ordination as baptism does to regeneration, for it is not even its symbol. Ordination involves recognition, but recognition does not involve ordination. The recognition theory is held by very many of the most respectable and influential Christian people, but can be called no more than a minor Protestant view, and is evidently

the result of drifting rather than of careful analysis and exegesis.

Section V.—New Testament View.

The all-important question now arises: Which, if either, of the foregoing views does the New Testament support?

If what has just been said with reference to the recognition theory be true, and the term *ordination* be conceded to reflect the New Testament view, the theory, of course, has no Scriptural support. But the common substitution of a representative council for a church presbytery is also against this theory, for a church presbytery is the only presbytery recognized in New Testament ecclesiology, (*p.* 234). Moreover, when, as is usual with those who hold this view, such council becomes a sovereign power upon which the church is made to depend, it is more than suggestive of a Romish leaning which, in this case, as we think, is anti-Scriptural. But still further, this theory presents us with ordination to the ministry at large, an idea utterly unknown to the New Testament. In the sense of *qualifying for any pastoral office*, it is an infringement upon New Testament church independency. In the sense of *qualifying to preach and administer ordinances anywhere*, it savors of the *character indelibilis.* In the sense of a mere *recognition of a divine call to preach*, it is no ordination, wanting both the fundamental idea and specific aim. Instance the case of Paul, who had acted upon such a call for years before the church in

Antioch ordained him, and whose ordination was exclusively specific in aim.

The consecration or character-imparting theory is so repugnant to Protestant feeling generally, both in itself and in nearly every feature of the sacramental system with which it articulates, that we shall make no special criticism upon it, but content ourselves with disposing of the whole subject by endeavoring to show, that the New Testament gives its unqualified support to the theory of election. Acts XIV: 23, as rendered in the revised version of the American Bible Union, is very explicit: "And having appointed for them elders in every church, they commended them, with prayer and fasting, to the Lord, on whom they believed." Here appointing is the essential thing, commending them to the Lord with prayer and fasting, and probably also imposition of hands, the circumstantial. The original moreover indicates that this appointment was by vote of the people, the word used being *χειροτονήσαντες*, which means, according to Robinson, *holding up the hand as in voting.*

It is true, appointing is affirmed only of Paul and Barnabas, but the supposition is, that a part is taken for the whole, or, more strictly speaking, the representatives for the represented. Thus Ignatius, in his epistle to Polycarp, pastor of the church at Smyrna, speaks of his sending a messenger to a council to be held at Antioch, though the context shows clearly that the messenger was to be elected by the church. (*Apostolic Fathers, p.* 267; *cf.* 265, 266). But whether or not this force of the original word be allowed, it

still remains that appointment by somebody was the vital thing, and commendation to the Lord in the manner described, its solemnization.

The appointment or ordination of the seven deacons would seem to have been a parallel case. Having "called the multitude of the disciples to them," the twelve said to them: "Look ye out among you seven men of good repute, full of the Holy Spirit and of wisdom, whom we will appoint over this business." The people elected and the twelve prayed and imposed hands. Nor was the ordination of an apostle to fill the place of Judas any exception to our rule. "They (the hundred and twenty) appointed two, Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias. And they prayed, saying: Thou, Lord, who knowest the hearts of all, show which of these two thou didst choose. And they gave their lots (votes perhaps); and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles." (*Acts* 1: 23, 26). No consecration is mentioned, and certainly no mere recognition is allowable. Should the case of Paul and Barnabas be regarded as an exception, it is sufficient to reply that, so far as the record goes to show, the church in Antioch was directed, not to ordain, but to "set apart," which, if it mean anything more than their formal consecration, means doubtless election. Bishop Onderdonk denies that there was any ordination in the case. (*Episcopacy Tested by Scrip.*, 17). We think an ordination was implied though not expressed.

So far as we know, there is no exception clearly de-

fined in the New Testament. It is true, election is not specified in every case which we are accustomed to name ordination, but it may be supposed, without violence to any statements made or any knowledge we have of early Christian usages. Neander, in his Introduction to Coleman's Primitive Christianity (*p.* 19), says: "The brethren chose their own officers from among themselves. Or if, in the first organization of the churches, their officers were appointed by the apostles, it was with the approbation of the members of the same." So emphatically true is it that, Scripturally judged, ordination is an election, that Prof. Ripley with propriety says of the imposition of hands: "It is not essential to an ordination or to a person's being acknowledged as a minister." (*Church Polity*, 164.) We unhesitatingly set aside the consecration and recognition theories, therefore, in favor of the election.

Section VI.—Caution.

But while we reject recognition as a theory, we should not reject *ratification of a divine choice* from our theory of election. "Set apart for me, to the work to which I have called," should always rule our ordinations. If God's voice is to be heard anywhere in church operations, it should most certainly be heard in the filling of church offices. But more of this anon.

Section VII.—In Whom Vests the Ordaining Power?

Principles Stated.

In answering this question we must keep steadily in mind the distinction drawn between election, consecration and recognition. If ordination be election, our question does not mean: Who are the proper persons to impose hands? and in no way concerns any magical, spiritual or other virtue which may be thought to follow that ceremony. It simply means: Who has the authority to induct one into a given ministerial office? The answer to this question would seem to be very easy. *They only can have authority to whom the office belongs.* If it be an eldership or deaconate in a particular church, that church alone has jurisdiction in the case. If it be the work of a traveling preacher, like that of Paul and Barnabas, or Timothy and Titus, the church to which the incumbents belong has jurisdiction, since not only does the oversight of its own members devolve upon it, but it also has as independent a jurisdiction over the general work of evangelization as any body of Christians can have In either case the church may employ the counsel or use the moral power of neighboring churches to ensure greater safety or influence, but authority vests in itself alone. Propriety may suggest, as the Scriptures teach, that the eldership impose hands, but it cannot suggest, either that the body to which authority belongs transfer it, or that any other body usurp it.

New Testament Teaching.

The position taken is so manifestly sound as to hardly need even the support of revelation. But confirmation can do no harm. Please observe, then, with what unanimity the ordination cases mentioned in the New Testament sustain it. Christ alone chose the twelve apostles, for they were his officers alone. The hundred and twenty chose Matthias to be a successor of Judas, for, so far as any human authority existed in the nascent state of the church at that time, they possessed it. Matthias was one of them. The seven deacons were chosen by the church at Jerusalem to which they belonged. Of Paul and Barnabas it is expressly stated, that they were "in the church" at Antioch which ordained them, while of the elders whom they appointed with the concurrence of the churches of Asia Minor, it is as expressly stated, that they appointed them *in* the churches. Should the case of Timothy be thought to be an exception, they who would make it so assume the burden of proof, for the presumption is against the supposition.

The eldership which imposed their hands upon him doubtless belonged to the church of which he was a member, and acted upon its authority; (*Alford's view on* 1 *Tim.* IV: 14); if not, it still remains that formal induction into office or work rather than ordination in its fulness, is the thing specified in the Word, which would render it quite immaterial whether or not they belonged to the same church, only so they acted upon its authority.

Writers and Confessions.

We may now add that this view has generally prevailed among careful thinkers, we suppose, except as their ideas of the church have departed from the simplicity of the Word, or they have confounded the essential with the circumstantial in ordination. That there is much of confusion and want of logical accuracy, as well as of Scriptural knowledge, in the common thinking, is readily conceded, but this proves nothing save the need of having the subject thoroughly canvassed. The London and Philadelphia Confessions, before alluded to, were very explicit. Take the Confession of 1689 (*cp.* XXVI, 9) for example: "The way appointed by Christ for the calling of any person, fitted and gifted by the Holy Spirit, unto the office of bishop, or elder, in the church, is that he be chosen thereunto by the common suffrage of the church itself; and solemnly set apart by fasting and prayer, with imposition of hands of the eldership of the church, if there be any before constituted therein; and of a deacon that he be chosen by the like suffrage, and set apart by prayer, and the like imposition of hands." Congregationalist writers are equally explicit. Hence says Punchard: "Upon Congregational principles the right and power to ordain church officers, whether deacons or elders, is undoubtedly *in the churches.*" In Great Britain they do not even call councils for ordination purposes, a practice it might be well to imitate unless the work of councils can be so modified, that they shall not utterly eclipse the churches for which they act.

Section VIII.—Presbyterial versus Episcopal Ordination.

This view being correct, we are spared the labor of discussing the ha kneyed question of Presbyterial *versus* Epis opal ordination, since the electing power resides in neither of those officials, but always in the church to which the candidate belongs, they simply officiating as leading constituents of the body or at its request. They impose hands according to Scripture precedent, but this is not the ordination, only its solemn expression with appropriate prayer.

Section IX.—Ordination by Theological Seminaries.

The question of ordination by Theological Seminaries is also settled with equal ease. If their members constitute a church of Jesus Christ and need a pastor, they may ordain one if they please, *provided* he is a member with them. Otherwise it is sufficient to say: Ordaining power vests in the body which owns the office.

Section X.—Ordination to the Ministry at Large.

With no less ease do we settle, if need still be, the propriety of ordaining men to offices in the denomination at large. If the idea of the church is that of a confederation of societies, under a government outside of and above them all, as among Catholics, Episcopalians, Episcopal Methodists and Presbyterians, it might be self-consistent for that superior government to fill its offices, whether consistent with the New Testa-

ment or not. But where the idea of the church, as among Baptists and Congregationalists, is that of an individual society of baptized believers, such a practice could be tenable upon no ground, since by no possibility of logic can it be made proper for any body of men to elect a candidate to fill an office which does not exist. Let the statement be clearly understood. The Baptist denomination, having no organized existence, has and can have no offices. Hence there is no such thing as a ministry of the denomination at large, or a repository of pastors already ordained and ready to serve any of the churches. Baptists have theological professors, missionaries, so-called evangelists, secretaries of missionary and other societies, agents, etc., who serve all the churches, though only a little more emphatically than does the local pastor, but they are not ministers at large requiring ordination by representatives of all the churches. They are still the servants especially of the churches to which they belong, and to whose discipline they are amenable. Those churches, therefore, are the proper ordaining bodies. For theological professors as such, or any other body of men, even the whole denomination assembled, to ordain ministers for the denomination at large, is a logical inconsistency. Nay, it is worse than that; it not only creates an office which does not exist and belittles the church which does exist by the sovereign election of God, but it proceeds upon the Romish idea of ordination, as though it did impart the veritable *character indelibilis*.

This point is so mystified in the public mind that we may appropriately dwell upon it a little. Even as rigid independents as the Old-Landmarkers of the South are mystified, holding substantially the Romish idea, and hence so stoutly repudiating the exchange of pulpits by Baptist ministers with Pedobaptist. They reason: "1. There is no church, but a body of immersed believers who have been duly immersed by a duly appointed officer of a Scriptural church. 2. There are no Scriptural ministers but those who have been duly authorized (baptized and ordained) by a Scriptural church. 3. Therefore, so long as we appropriate our pulpits for the official preaching of the gospel by those whom we consider duly baptized and ordained to the ministerial office, it is equally evident that it is improper for us to invite those teachers to occupy them when we know they are neither baptized nor ordained." (*The Baptist*, published at Memphis, Tenn.). The ordination, in such reasoning, we say, is essentially Romish, for the whole reasoning turns upon the idea that ordination, duly administered, imparts to him who receives it an essential fitness for the work of the ministry at large, which fitness he who is not duly ordained does not possess. It is simply the question of the *character indelibilis* in disguise, the Landmarkers affirming their ability to impart it, while they deny the ability of the Pedobaptists. And, strange to say, they, and for the most part the present Pedobaptists, whose ministry they repudiate, and not a few of their less rigid Baptist brethren whom they censure for their looseness, are now all in

the same boat as respects the fundamental idea of ordination, differing simply in the use ma. e of it. This is manifest from the opinion so prevalent among all alike, that ordination, in some manner, gives fitness for the ministry at large. And to add wonder to the strangeness of the case, all alike limit this idea of ordination to the ministry of the gospel, not applying it to the deaconship, though manifestly ordination, for substance, is the same in all cases.

Surely a dense fog spreads over Protestantism as soon as the *character indelibilis* idea of ordination supplants the idea of election. Let the latter idea prevail among the bodies just alluded to, and sunlight will at once cover their interministerial relations, as well as their particular ministries.

If concerning the latter it is said, that an ordaining council representing the churches in general properly puts a man into the ministry at large, whence it is easy to infer his fitness for the pastorate of a particular church, we repeat what we have already said in substance, that no authoritative body has delegated any such power to a council, and add that it is just as easy to infer fitness for one specific ministry from ordination to another as it is to infer it from ordination to a general ministry. And in the business world we imagine the former inference would be regarded as much better in kind than the latter, for it is a business maxim that "a jack at all trades is good for none." But, what is more important, we know of no Scriptural precedent for any inference but the former. The New Testament, so far as we know, furnishes not an

instance of ordination to the ministry at large. In every aspect of the case, then, this lapsing toward Rome is unfortunate, and we hope may be speedily checked. Ordination an election made and solemnized by a church to an office over which the church has jurisdiction, is the branch to throw into this Marah of bitterness.

Section XI.—The Significance of Laying on of Hands in Ordination.

Where the idea of ordination is limited to the ceremonial part, as in both the consecration and recognition theories, it is natural enough, considering the tendencies of human nature, to magnify it into something supernatural. And it may also be granted that, if no distinction be made in cases, this tendency receives some stimulus from the Scriptures; for it is readily conceded, that sometimes the imposition of hands is attended by the impartation of supernatural power. Hence the august assumption when the officiating bishop, with hands imposed, solemnly says: "Receive the Holy Ghost." Hence, too, that otherwise intolerable idea of power flowing like a holy stream from the apostles as fountain head, along the line of a succession of priests to the present time, and to cut off which, at any point of its progress, were as fatal to a perishing world as cutting off the flow of the river of life.

But the question arises: Is the laying on of hands *in ordination* a power-imparting act, or is it no more than a symbolic invocation of power? Words and

acts are wont to be quite elastic, so as to cover a variety of correlated ideas.

To impose my hands upon the head of a person or a company with my benediction, might be very natural under some circumstances, and might stand related to what power I possess, the same as the imposition of hands by Christ to what power he possesses, and yet the results might be infinitely different, simply because he possesses power and I am all weakness. In a similar way might the case stand as between myself and a miracle-working apostle. I actually do impose my hands, I suppose, whenever I lift them to pronounce a benediction, but I do not imagine that I do anything more than invoke power. My soul moves in desire and my hands symbolize the movement.

It may be so in ordination. The Scriptures can alone decide.

Appeal to the Scriptures.

We appeal to the Scriptures with all confidence for support of the opinion consonant with the idea of election, that no man, not even an apostle, by the imposition of his hands imparts any spiritual power to the subject of ordination. The practice is doubtless of Old Testament origin, and we may therefore well take an example from that source. Take the case of Moses and Joshua, Numb. XXVII: 18–20, "And the Lord said unto Moses: Take thee Joshua, the son of Nun, a man in whom is the Spirit, and lay thine hand upon him; and set him before Eleazer the priest and before all the congregation; and give him a charge in

their sight. And thou shalt put some of thine honor upon him, that all the congregation may be obedient." Now what did Moses impart by his imposition of hands? Not the Spirit, for the prior possession of this was Joshua's qualification for his appointment to leadership among the hosts of Israel.

The only thing he could have imparted, then, so far as the record informs us, was his honor, to connect which with his imposition of hands exclusively would require an immense imposition upon common sense. Besides, it is nothing to our point if we do so connect it. So far as we are informed Moses imparted nothing in the line of character to Joshua. In the case of Paul and Barnabas, constructed upon this Old Testament model, it would seem, nothing more was imparted. Indeed, according to Acts XIV: 26, the whole ceremony was one of commendation "to the grace of God for the work which they accomplished"—an exposition which, in the absence of anything to the contrary, it is fair to presume is applicable to all similar cases. As to the deacons of the Jerusalem church, they were ordained because, among other qualifications, they were already "full of the Holy Spirit." Concerning Matthias, called to the vacant apostleship, and the elders appointed in the churches of Asia Minor, we are not told that hands were laid upon them at all.

If there is any exception to this simply symbolic use of the rite, it must be found in the case of Timothy. The references to the case are as follows: "Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee through prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of

the eldership," (1 *Tim.* IV: 14); and, "For which cause I put thee in remembrance, that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the laying on of my hands." (2 *Tim.* I: 6).

Now whether the same gift is alluded to in both references is by no means certain. For aught we know, the one imposition of hands may have been at his baptism and the other at his ordination. But grant that both references respect ordination. Then, according to the former, the gift sustains a similar relation to the imposition of hands it does to prophecy. And what that was, we may gather from chapter I: 18. "This charge I commit to thee, my child Timothy, *according to* the prophecies which went before concerning thee, that thou mayest wage in them a good warfare." A gift through prophecy, then, was not a gift conferred by prophecy, but one according to it. And so, by parity of reasoning, a gift by laying on of hands, in this instance at least, was not a gift bestowed by the imposition, but one according to its symbolic supplication, which, by an easy and perfectly logical method, reduces the case of Timothy to the common level of the more important ones previously noticed. The significance of this ordination symbol is therefore plain. It means no mysterious, spiritual power imparted by human hands, but simply blessings invoked. In no way, therefore, does it modify the idea that ordination consists essentially in an election, of which prayer and the imposition of the hands of the eldership is the august and Scriptural solemnization.

Section XII.—Reordination.

The idea has very general prevalence that ordination is never to be repeated. Coleman says that, "according to all ecclesiastical usage," it "cannot be repeated." And the council of Trent, in view of the *character indelibilis* which it imparts, formally decided that it is not to be repeated on the same person. (*Hag. His. of Doc. II*, 82. 6).

Three Hypotheses.

There are three hypotheses, on either of which reordination would evidently be improper: 1. On that just named, where, regarded as a consecration, it is supposed to impart *character indelibilis.* 2. In case the ordained were to remain permanently in the office to which a church had called him; and, 3. In case he were to go from place to place, but the office to which he had been called belonged, not to an individual society, but to a church universal, a denomination. In the last two cases, reordination would not be called for even though it were regarded as but an election.

Now the prevalence of one or another of these hypotheses will abundantly account for reordination having been so uncommon.

In the days of the Apostles, so far as we know, the second hypothesis ruled, and hence there is no appearance of reordination (that is, reordination to the same office though in different churches), while, for most of the time since the Apostles, one or both, and generally both, of the other hypotheses have ruled and hence reordination has been a logical impropriety. Thus we

can abundantly account for the prevalence of the idea that ordination is not to be repeated.

But neither of the hypotheses named covers the state of those churches of the present day whose idea of ordination is election, and whose idea of the church is that of a local and individual society governing itself, but whose idea of the pastoral office is that of change at the dictate of caprice or by mutual (dis)agreement of the parties. What of reordination in such a case? Stern logic answers very decidedly. If pastoral changes occur, ordinations should occur as often. There can be no propriety of ordaining in one instance unless there be in every other. If it be thought that to ordain as often as some churches and pastors make changes, would degrade the very idea of ordination, we might readily grant it, but would have to say, the difficulty is in the ungodly fickleness which makes the changes and not in reordination. If it is desired to retain the divine dignity of ordination, let pastors and churches restrain the unholy spirit of speculation which puts the pastoral office into market so often. Ordination being an election, and office being limited to a local society, it follows inevitably, that change means reordination if ordination is to be practiced at all. And so the logical have put it.

Ecclesiastical Usage.

It is not quite true that all ecclesiastical usage is against reordination.

The famous old Cambridge Platform of 1648 enacted as follows:

"He that is clearly loosed from his office relation unto that church whereof he was a minister, cannot be looked at as an officer, nor perform any act of office in any other church, unless he be again orderly called unto office; which when it shall be, we know nothing to hinder, but imposition of hands also in his ordination ought to be used toward him again." (*Chap.* IX., *Sec.* 7).

The "Heads of Agreement," assented to by the Presbyterians and Congregationalists of England about the year 1680, and adopted in connection with the Saybrook Platform in Connecticut, in 1708, also recognize the propriety of reordination, if any desire it, thus:

"That, whereas such ordination is only intended for such as had never before been ordained to the ministerial office; if any judge, that in case also of the removal of one formally ordained, to a new station, or pastoral charge, there ought to be a like, solemn recommending him and his labors to the grace and blessing of God; no different sentiments or practice herein, shall be any occasion of contention or breach of communion among us."

Such was the unanimity of view among those who adopted the Cambridge Platform, that Cotton Mather said, that "upon the translation of pastors from one church to another among us, (a thing they allowed only in extraordinary cases), few of the pastors thus translated, have scrupled being reordained." The principal exceptions to the rule were "some desirable pastors formerly ordained in England, who scrupled at it," and whose ministry, for that reason, the churches were wil-

ling to enjoy "without their being reordained at all." (*Magnalia, Vol. II.*, 209).

In Andrew Fuller's day, the practice would seem to have been common among Baptists, judging from an occurrence he mentions. "It having been the practice of some dissenting ministers to receive ordination but once," he says, "it became a question, at a meeting lately held in the country, whether a pastor removing to another church should be reordained. The ministers about to engage in such service, considering ordination, not as a designation to the work of the ministry (of which they find no examples in the New Testament), but as a solemn appointment to office in a Christian church, were of the opinion that a previous ordination had no influence in the appointment to office in another church. They allowed that reordination is unprecedented in the New Testament, and so also is the removal of a pastor from one church to another; if the latter were found, they supposed the former would accompany it." (*Works, III.*, 492). The installation ceremonies so common in our day, are a witness for the reordination of other days, for they are unquestionably its fossil remains. A note appended to the article from the Cambridge Platform quoted above, says:

"No difference is made in the platform between ordination and installation, imposition of hands being used in both cases."

The Line of Duty.

The fundamental hypotheses being what they are in the independent churches, the line of duty is as clear

as possible. A minister removing from one church to another, is no more a pastor of the latter church than a justice of the peace removing from one town to another is a justice of the peace in the latter town, and hence ordination in the first place has spent all its force and avails nothing in the second. Martin Luther said: "The office of a Christian minister ought not to be different from that of a bailiff. While he is in office he has the precedence before others; but when he is removed from office, he is a peasant or citizen like every body else (he has not a *character indelibilis*)." (*Hag. His. of Docts. II.*, 294.) It is a popular misapprehension of the fundamental hypotheses alluded to, or of ordination itself, and it may be of both, which gives us the modern Jacob in a hairy and not altogether seemly imitation of Esau, that is, a Protestant theory in a Romish practice. And this misapprehension, while originating, it may be, in the mutual influence of denominations of different church theories upon each other, is very largely fostered by the loose language which has prevailed, and by the methods of conducting ordination councils in the absence of a presbytery in the churches, these methods practically making the idea of character imparted to overshadow the idea of an election solemnized. We owe it to our good brains, as well as to the cause of truth, to come clear out of Rome in this matter, leaving her to monopolize her unscriptural church ideas, succession theory, character indelibilis, titles and tiaras.

Section XIII.—Application of Principles.

We come now to our last and most practical point—the application of our principles to current usage, especially Baptist usage.

Emphasis upon the Ceremonial.

Usage emphasizes especially the ceremonial part of ordination. Hence the formal charges and multiplied ceremonies connected with the imposition of hands. It would be most unnatural as well as unscriptural to infer from what we have said, that this part has no emphasis, because it is the formal and not the material. As well conclude that a symbolic birth by water is of no account, because birth by the Spirit is more vital. Let each stand upon its own merits or Scriptural basis. Though formal consecration do not impart the *character indelibilis*, it may be a Scriptural and useful expression of important things, as clearly it is. It says on the behalf of both the candidate and the church, as also of the council, if there be one: "We mutually believe God has instituted this official relation which we now solemnize," a conviction which ought always to attend installation into the leading church offices, and is of consequence enough to be expressed in the most solemn form. It says again: "We recognize the need of divine qualifications for the duties of the office, and hence we thus solemnly implore them with hands imposed." It says further: "We hold ourselves amenable to divine law in all things, and hence we follow Scripture precedent in the manner of solemnizing our election." Now are not these important things to say?

Infinitely more important, we take it, than to say what is not true with reference to *character indelibilis;* vastly more important in the abstract, for these are the very sentiments that need to be written indelibly upon all concerned in the offices of the Christian church. No abatement of any force properly belonging to the ceremonial follows from the idea, that it is the formal and not the vital. We only make the vital appear vital. It would be a most reckless indifference which should belittle either the vital or the formal.

Councils.

Usage makes emphatic use of councils in ordination. Our principles neither discard nor demand them. They do, however, forbid their being more than their name *council* indicates. If our churches had each its board of elders to impose hands, as per New Testament precedent, they could dispense entirely with councils if they pleased. Certainly they are not a New Testament necessity. But it might, nevertheless, in so important a matter as choosing a pastor, be advisable to take counsel and make their ordination duly impressive. Doubtless the ministerial office would be none too well guarded in that event. But, council or not, it is never to be forgotten that ordination is a most solemn ratification of a divine choice. This idea needs to be graven deep in all minds,—in the minds of aspirants to any ministerial office, that they assume, Korah-like, no official functions which God has not assigned, and in the minds of the laity, that they may be duly careful about giving their suffrages, and by

proxy imposing their hands where God has not clearly indicated the path of duty. Looseness here is scarcely inferior, in turpitude of guilt, to rebellion. The greatest prayerfulness and care should attend any one's induction into ministerial office.

Results of Reordination.

We need not say that usage is still against reordination. Personally we have never known a case of reordination, and we query whether the instances we have adduced may not astonish many of our readers, so general is the concession that ordination is a thing for life, at least as respects the minister. We have just shown, however, that reordination is a logical outcome of our principles if changes are to occur in the pastoral office.

But suppose now we return to the path of logical propriety and ordain as often as a minister enters a pastorate, what would result?

Troublesome Anomaly.

One result evidently would be, that we should get rid of that *troublesome anomaly*, officers without offices, pastors without charges, ordained men with nothing to which they are ordained. We should understand that a minister, just as Martin Luther put it, and like any other man elected to office, retires to the common level when his office is vacated instead of becoming a Reverend Nondescript, whom no one knows where to place or how to treat. This would be a great relief, to say the least, to all concerned. Nor could

there be any essential loss in point of moral influence, for all there is in character which ought to give influence remains. It would be simply a cessation of that self-imposition we are so prone to practice by imagining things to be what they are not. But this result is a trifle compared with others which would follow.

Permanency in the Pastoral Office.

One of the great benefits of logical adherence to principle in re-ordination would be, that it would give, if anything can give, *permanency to the pastoral office.* Lamentation is well nigh universal over the short pastorates which characterize our times. But the wail only keeps time to change, without having the least tendency to check it. From Michigan to Texas, and from Maine to California, wail and change are as wild as the veering winds. And it is not incredible that the wail might become twice as constant and doleful as it now is, while change followed as though its very echo. What is wanted to quiet the turbulent sea of feeling on which pastorless churches and churchless pastors float like so many dismantled vessels, is the acknowledged presence of him who said to Galilee, "Peace, be still." In other words, God must be recognized in pastoral relations. No more should we recognize the need of a divine call to the ministry of the gospel in general, than we do to any given ministry in particular. Baptists are right now in theory, but we are constrained to say, we think they are reprobate in practice upon this latter point. We do not believe a God is recognized in those hireling ministries which

begin and end every year, it may be, by mutual disagreement. What all parties need is to have the doctrine of a divine call to each particular ministry so control their actions, that neither of them shall think of solemnizing a union, or tolerating a separation, until they had the mind of him who directs to pray the Lord of the harvest for laborers. And we know of no way by which such a result can be reached so well as to have a distinct recognition of the doctrine, in a formal ordination, as often as ordination occurs in fact. This will of necessity lead the parties to convict either themselves or God of whatever fickleness may be involved where changes occur too frequently, which will be a great point gained. There can be no doubt as to who will be convicted, and the strong hope is that conviction will lead to conversion. Could every church and pastor in the land be brought to adopt this simple rule of action from this day forth, it would cleanse them both of their corrupting unbelief on the matter of pastoral relations as suddenly as Hercules cleansed the Augean stables.

Godlessness in Theology.

Nor could results end here. Another and quite as important a result growing out of this fresh enthronement of God in Zion would be the check it would give to an alarming evil, which we know not how better to name than to call it *godlessness in theology*. We refer to the tendency to throw out the supernatural, not only from the work of the Holy Spirit in regeneration, but also from the atonement and character of Christ, and,

all over the land, and filling many churches with Christians whose Christ is scarcely more above themselves than were the Pagan deities of Greece and Rome above their lustful votaries.

But let God, the great supernatural, be enthroned in Zion, as he must be if he is distinctly recognized in filling her offices, and this blind godlessness will flee apace. Then may it emphatically be said, by all who now labor so earnestly to vindicate the truth, "God *is known* in her palaces for a refuge." Then shall the name of the Head of the Church, "Immanuel, God with us," take a significance which it has never had before. Let the name of Jehovah be inscribed upon the banners which float from the mountain peaks of official elevation in our Zion, and his Spirit's power will be felt and acknowledged all through the humbler, though not less important, vales of laic life.

THE END.

27 BOND ST., (near Broadway,)
NEW YORK, *October*, 1875.

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Trial of Rev. Wm. I. Gill, before the Newark Methodist Conference, for Writing "Evolution and Progress."

[From the N. Y. *Sun*, April 1, 1875.]

The Newark Conference of the M. E. Church met in Trinity Church, Jersey City, yesterday morning, Bishop Bowman, presiding. A motion to appoint a committee to investigate the charges of heresy preferred against Dr. Gill led to a protracted and warm discussion. His work on "EVOLUTION AND PROGRESS" was criticised as rejecting "Bibleism, miracleism, and out Huming Hume," the quotation being from a review published in a Methodist periodical. Dr. Adams charged that the book was thoroughly infidel in its tendencies, and that its theory of evolution was not only opposed to revelation, but a clear denial of the personal existence of God. The motion to appoint a committee was then adopted.

[From the N. Y. *Times*, April 2, 1875.]

Yesterday the Bishop announced the names of a committee appointed to investigate a charge of heresy preferred against Rev. Wm. I. Gill.

[From the N. Y. *Sun*, April 6, 1875.]

In the Newark M. E. Conference yesterday, the Gill heresy committee reported. The report was laid over.

[From the N. Y. *Herald*, April 7, 1875.]

The session of the Newark Methodist Conference, at Jersey City yesterday, was the most lively since the commencement of the proceedings.

The Gill heresy case was taken up, and a lively debate took place for and against the report of the investigating committee. During the debate, a decided feeling was manifested among the audience, and the Rev. Dr. Porter hoped that no such manifestations would be repeated. Bishop Bowman said that such exhibitions could not be permitted, at which a pious brother remarked that he couldn't help saying "amen" once in a while.

Rev. Mr. Gill then arose and opened his defence. The proposition he put to the brethren was a very plain one. If they did not like the book they could reject it. He held that there was nothing in it, in his belief, not in accordance with the tenets of the Methodist Church, and he claimed the right to understand his own book. He proposed, however, to search after truth wherever it may be found, whether the Conference believed it was truth or not. He did not believe it was the business of the Conference to pass judgment as to what were the truths of science. His book was written according to new ideas which have been evolved, and he said that to-day the evolutionists have the advantage philosophically over the Church. He thought old ideas ought to be laid aside when God furnishes new ones. Mr. Gill then spoke of the pain he felt because he was misunderstood. He said, however, that although he is misunderstood, he still deemed that he was right. He thanked God that he was a Methodist, and hoped that the eyes of the brethren would be opened to more advanced ideas, and that they will receive more confidence. As to the report of the committee, if it was adopted he did not know whether he would be able to give entire satisfaction.

Rev. Dr. Crane paid a glowing tribute to the religious character of the Rev. Mr. Gill, but thought that the bane and the antidote in the book were too far apart. Rev. Mr. Atkinson argued against the adoption of the report. He thought it would be very inconsistent for the Conference to send forth a minister to preach a gospel which his book utterly destroys.

After remarks by other speakers the question was put on the adoption of the report, and it was carried, and the character of the Rev. Mr. Gill was passed.

[From the *Christian Index*, Atlanta, Ga., May 6, 1875.]

Charges were brought against him in the Newark, New Jersey, Conference, of "heresy and atheism," on account of his book. He passed the ordeal, however, triumphantly as his faith was unimpeachable, though the Conference called public attention to Dr. Gill's philosophy, and caused an increased sale of his book.

[From the Baltimore *Methodist Protestant*, April 10, 1875.]

Rev. W. I. Gill, author of "Evolution and Progress," noticed some weeks since in our columns, has been charged with heresy before his Conference by certain brethren who see in his book "hydras, and gorgans and chimeras dire."

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